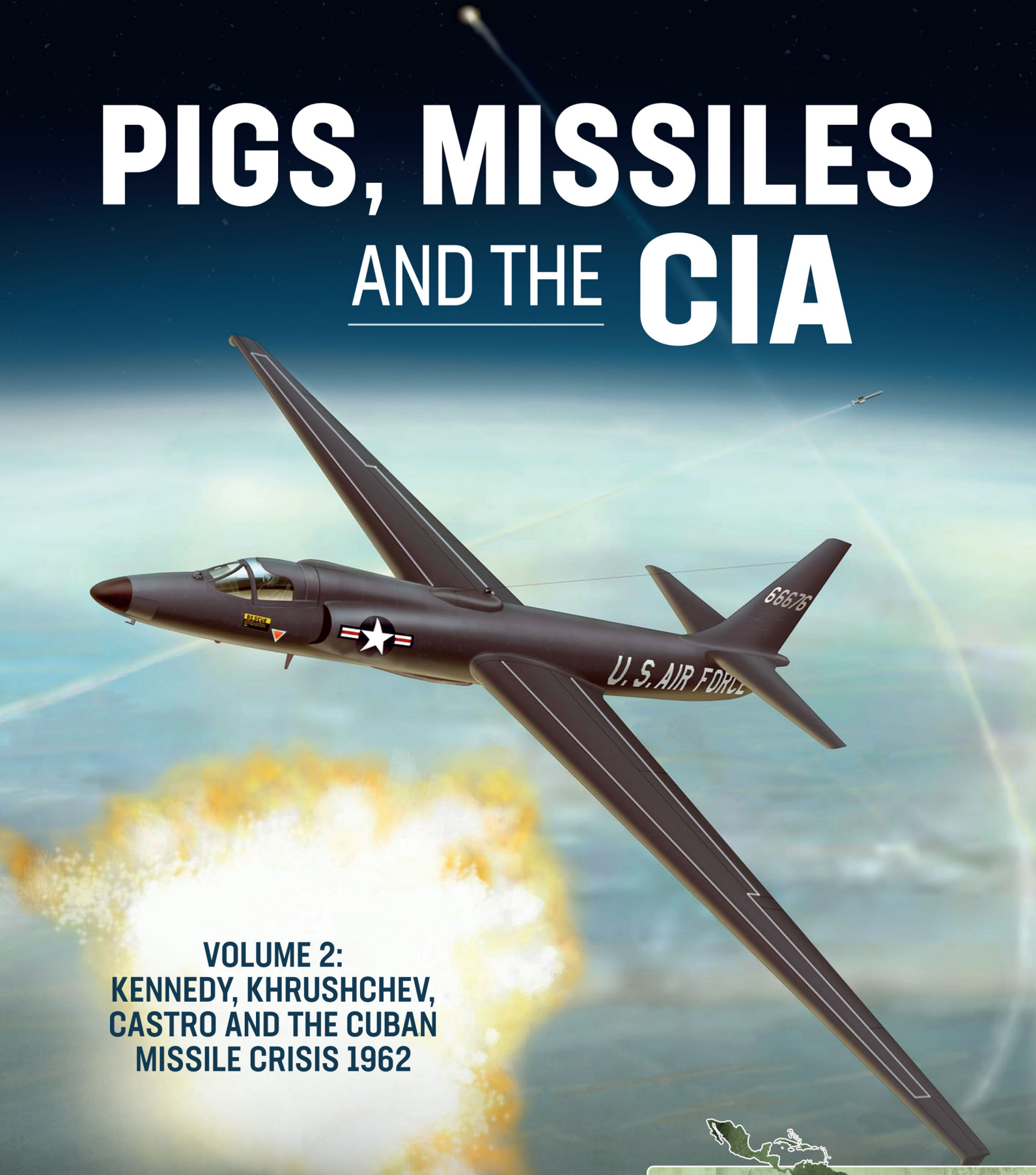
– LATIN AMERICA@WAR 37 –

PIGS, MISSILES AND THE CIA



VOLUME 2: KENNEDY, KHRUSHCHEV, CASTRO AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS 1962

LINDA RIOS BROMLEY

LATIN AMERICA@WAR SERIES

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Cover image: On 27 October 1962, as US intelligence had assessed that the Soviets were short of completing the construction of their SAM network on Cuba, the USAF sent one of its Lockheed U-2s for a final overflight of the island. The Soviets however had already completed the construction of the entire network and it was now active. The aircraft piloted by Major Rudolf Anderson Jr. flew into a 'SAM trap' during his sixth mission over Cuba. While underway high over Banes, Anderson's U-2 was targeted by at least two S-75 (ASCC/NATO reporting name 'SA-2 Guideline') missiles. (Art by Pablo Patricio Albornoz © Helion & Company 2023)

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFB	Air Force Base
AS	Anti-Submarine
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare
CFC	Cuban Families Committee
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CINC	Commander in Chief
comm	communication(s)
DC	District of Columbia
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DCO	Damage Control Officer
DEFCON	Defense Condition
ExComm	Executive Committee
FAR	*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias* (Revolutionary Armed Forces)
Helo	helicopter
ICBM	intercontinental ballistic missile
IFF	Friend or Foe
IRBM	Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missiles
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JOOD	Junior Officer of the Deck
KGB	*Koimmitet Gosudarstveny Bezopastnosty* (Committee for State Security)
MRBM	medium-range ballistic missile
NAS	Naval Air Station
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPIC	National Photographic Interpretation Center
NY	New York state
OAS	Organization of American States
OOD	Officer of the Deck
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCN	Royal Canadian Navy
SAC	Strategic Air Command
SAM	surface-to-air missile
SOSUS	Sound Surveillance System
SRW	Strategic Reconnaissance Wing
TAC	Tactical Air Command
TCI	Turks and Caicos Islands
TFW	Tactical Fighter Wing
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
USAF	United States Air Force
USD	US dollar(s)
USS	United States Ship
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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During the preparation of Volume 1 and Volume 2 of *Pigs, Missiles and the CIA*, I had a great deal of support from my writers' group that I have attended for several years. Stan Marshall, Gordon Rottman, Terry Miller, Todd Davis and Steven Meador, thank you all for your input and critiques. Terry, thanks much for your help on the naval lingo. Bird Farm? Who would have thought it referred to an aircraft carrier. Special thanks to Duncan Rogers at Helion & Co., Tom Cooper and Bill Norton, my editors. It has been such a pleasure to work with everyone at Helion.

1

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Prologue

'And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.' James 3:18

'Only in the event of a landing of the opponent's forces on the Island of Cuba and if there is a concentration of enemy ships with landing forces near the coast of Cuba, in its territorial waters and there is no possibility of receiving orders from the USSR Ministry of Defence, you are personally allowed as an exception to take the decision to apply the tactical Luna missiles as a means of local destruction of the opponent on land and on the coast with the arm of a full crushing defeat of troops on the territory of Cuba and the defence of the Cuban Revolution.'[1]

Stage Setting

'An iron curtain has descended across the Continent.' – Winston Churchill, March 1946

The hostility between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR; colloquially the 'Soviet Union') and the United States of America (USA) was basically one of opposite political theories. Communism stressed collectivism: all property was publicly owned under an unelected and powerful leadership that made all decisions for the citizens. Capitalism, was the direct opposite, focused on individual freedom, personal choices and support by a democratically elected leadership. These differences led to the major distrust between the two philosophies.

Joseph Stalin, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, supported the introduction of communism by direct military invasion or by supplying rebels with weapons and supplies. By contrast, America's elected presidents supported countries that were at risk of falling under the threat of communism.

America's and Russia's losses during the Second World War were massively disproportionate. America lost 400,000 soldiers, Russia lost 24 million people in addition to suffering significant destruction to large cities, industrial complexes and infrastructure. The Soviet Union spent large amounts of its own funds to rebuild areas destroyed by the Nazi invasion. While America did not suffer direct damage to its homeland, the US did support those European countries that had incurred massive devastation.

Following the end of the war a number of conflicts broke out around the world where the Soviet Union or the US supported the warring groups on opposite sides. The Soviet Union and US avoided direct armed conflict with each other primarily because of the development of the nuclear bomb. Everyone knew what they stood to lose if nuclear weapons were unleashed.

A holdover issue from the Second World War resulted when the US, Britain, France and the Soviet Union divided the defeated Germany into four zones of occupation. Berlin, located within the Soviet-occupied zone, was also divided, with the western part of the city under Allied control and the east under that of the Soviets. Plans for the future of Germany began to unravel when Joseph Stalin sought to punish Germany economically. He planned to force Germany to pay war reparations and contribute to the Soviet post-war recovery. However, the Allies intended to implement an economic recovery to provide a democratic buffer between the spread of communism from Eastern Europe which Stalin held with a strong arm.

The Allied forces of the US, Britain and France forged ahead with the introduction of a new West German currency, the Deutschmark, without advising the Soviets. In response, the Soviets introduced their own new currency for East Berlin and East Germany, the Ostmark. On 24 June 1948, the Soviets blocked all highway, railway and canal access to Allied-occupied zones of Berlin and announced the end of the four-way administration of the City of Berlin.

The Soviet blockade resulted in approximately 2.5 million citizens in the three western zones of Berlin cut off from access to electricity, food, coal, oil and medical supplies. Though the Soviet Army outnumbered Allied military forces in and around Berlin, the US and Britain retained control of three 20-mile-wide air corridors from West Germany into West Berlin. Two days after the blockade was implemented, on 26 June 1948, the US and British air forces began the largest air relief operation in history. Over 11 months, the Allies transported approximately 2.4 million tons of supplies into West Berlin and completed more than 270,000 flights.

Stalin hoped the Berlin Blockade would force the Allies to relinquish their plans to create a West German state. However, with the success of the Berlin Airlift, his hopes were for nothing. When the Soviets lifted the blockade in May 1949, the crisis in Berlin strengthened the East/West division of Germany and most of Europe. The Cold War had begun.[2]

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on 7 December 1941, the US joined the war and development of a nuclear weapon became most urgent. On 16 July 1945 in the wasteland of the New Mexico desert, the US successfully detonated the first nuclear weapon. Subsequently, on 6 August 1945, the first nuclear bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima and three days later another bomb was dropped on the City of Nagasaki. On 15 August the Japanese emperor surrendered, which signalled the end of the Second World War.

After the war, the US continued to be the only country to have nuclear technology though the Soviet Union worked feverishly to develop their own nuclear weapons. Under the direction of Igor Kurchatov, the Russians first tested a nuclear device, code named RDS-1, on 29 August 1949 in Kazakhstan, but results were questionable. Soviet espionage agents had obtained details of the US Manhattan Project which had produced an implosion-type nuclear device. RDS-1 closely resembled the US Fat Man bomb dropped on Nagasaki.

Russian influence in China and Korea did not pose a direct and immediate threat to North and South America. The Island of Cuba, 90 miles (144 kilometres) from the southern tip of Florida, for a short time was an independent country. However, the country relied a great deal on American business and economic assistance. The US took more interest in the island when communism escalated.

In 1933, Fulgencio Batista, a sergeant in the Cuban army, led a revolt on the island of Cuba and declared himself leader of the Cuban Armed Forces. He won the office of President in elections held in 1940. Following a four-year term, he moved to Florida, but he later returned to Cuba to run for president again. With no chance of winning the election against more left-wing candidates, Batista led another coup in 1956 and again declared himself president. Although the US was concerned about the rise of communism in the Caribbean, Batista became a useful tool. Corruption prospered on the island and Mafia leaders from the US found in Cuba an opportunity for profitable businesses including casinos and prostitution. By the late 1950s, American companies owned 90 percent of all mines, 80 percent of public utilities and 40 percent of the sugar business. Then-Senator John Kennedy even referred to Batista's leadership in Cuba as a 'reign of terror.'

Rebellion followed, and Batista's government was defeated on 31 December 1958, he fled to the Dominican Republic on 1 January 1959. On 16 February 1959 rebel leader Fidel Castro took the oath of office as self-designated prime minister and appointed Osvaldo Dorticos Torrado as the new president of Cuba. American President Dwight Eisenhower in August 1960 seized Cuban assets in the US and placed an embargo on all trade with Cuba. The US continued to operate military facilities at Guantánamo Bay ('Gitmo' to the GIs), at the southern end of the island, under the terms of a 1903 lease.

Keeping Watch

> 'Whether you like it or not, history is on our side. We will bury you.' – Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Communist Party.

As the communist threat was seen to grow, President Eisenhower requested more accurate and timely intelligence information primarily on the Soviet Union. Lockheed Corporation submitted a proposal in 1953, approved on 9 December 1954, for the development of a high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft. Clarence (Kelly) Johnson and Lockheed Skunk Works began work under a heavy veil of secrecy on the aircraft that would become the U-2. Pratt and Whitney produced the engine that would perform up to an altitude of 70,000 feet (21,300 metres). The single-seat pressurised cockpit enabled pilots to fly for up to 10 hours without full pressure suits, though pilots were measured for customised partial pressure suits to protect them in the event of aircraft pressure loss. The Hycon Company

developed a camera legendary for the quality of photography produced. To reduce as much weight as possible, designers removed the retractable gear. Removable gear called pogos were designed to be dropped from the aircraft after takeoff and reinstalled upon landing. Test Pilot Tony LeVier flew the first successful flight on 1 August 1955 after only eight months of development.

Following the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev had become the leading member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. He was seen as a weak leader, but he responded aggressively with bombastic verbal diatribes towards the US and Western Europe. At a summit meeting on 15 September 1959 at Camp David in Maryland, between the US and the Soviet Union, Premier Nikita Khrushchev demanded from President Dwight Eisenhower that the Western Allies leave Berlin within six months. It was not on Eisenhower's agenda; he believed a military presence to be important for the security of West Berlin.

1 May 1960, Sunday, May Day Celebration, Red Square, Moscow, Soviet Union

May Day was date significant to the Soviet Union and celebrated workers' solidarity with a huge parade at Red Square in Moscow. It was an opportunity to display for the world various weapons of the communist military. On that date in 1960, Francis G. Powers, a U-2 pilot with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), was targeted by a surface-to-air missile as he flew over the Soviet Union and shot down. He survived the crash, was captured, and convicted of espionage in a spectacle of a trial in Moscow. Powers was sentenced to three years confinement and seven years hard labour. However, on 10 February 1962, after 21 months confinement, he was exchanged in Potsdam, East Germany, for US-held Soviet *Koimmitet Gosudarstveny Bezopastnosty* (KGB) Agent Rudolph Abel.[3]

New Administration, Old Business

> 'Every man, woman and child live under a nuclear sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by accident or miscalculation or by madness.' – President John F. Kennedy

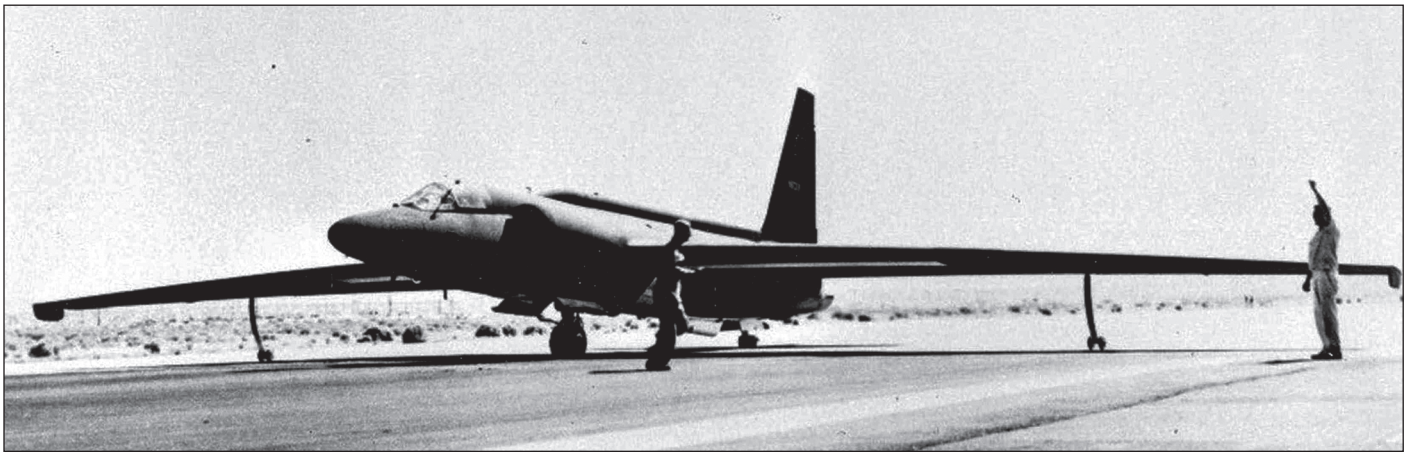
20 January 1961, John F. Kennedy, The Capitol, Washington, DC

From the moment of John F. Kennedy's inauguration on 20 January 1961, as the 35th President of the United States, he faced conflicts of varying magnitudes. He was young and handsome but inexperienced in global politics. He had been groomed by his father, Joseph P. Kennedy, former Ambassador to the United Kingdom. The elder Kennedy insisted there should be an Irish Catholic in The White House. Oldest son, Joseph P. Kennedy, died in the Second World War, and thus the aspirations of his father were passed to the second son, John. The most famous quote from his inaugural address still rings with fervour: 'Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.' Kennedy and his beautiful wife, Jackie, attracted the attention of Hollywood entertainers and fashion moguls. The media dubbed the lifestyle of the Kennedys as 'Camelot', following the name of a Broadway musical that enjoyed roaring success at that time. It was easy to forget that *Camelot* was also a story of tragedy.

Two years after the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro had nationalised US-owned oil refineries on the island. In response, before he left office on 20 January 1961, President Eisenhower had ordered a temporary trade embargo of all exports to Cuba except food and medicine. Following his inauguration, President Kennedy ordered the temporary trade embargo on Cuba to become permanent. He also placed restrictions on Americans travelling to Cuba. Through the President's request and influence, the Organization of American States (OAS) expelled Cuba from the group.[4] With no markets for its sugar in North and South America, Castro sought help from the Soviet Union in exchange for oil, weapons and ammunition. Castro believed strongly the US plotted to remove him from power.

The threats of communism, civil rights and nuclear weapons became issues that plagued the Kennedy administration from the outset. In April 1961, and not for the first time, Kennedy faced a crisis over Cuba. A CIA-organised plan, known as the Bay of Pigs invasion, involved a paramilitary drawn from Cuban exiles living in Florida invading the island with the express goal of overthrowing Fidel Castro's government and establishing a democracy. The operation, an embarrassing introduction for Kennedy's understanding of foreign policy, was a catastrophic failure which brought about closer ties between Fidel Castro and Nikita Khrushchev. The bond between Castro and Khrushchev strengthened, and by 1962 another crisis afforded Kennedy the opportunity to face his old nemesis again.

The ultimate goal of the Bay of Pigs invasion, to overthrow the communist regime in Cuba, had not been put aside. Understanding that Cuba was still a smouldering cauldron of communism close to the southern tip of Florida, President Kennedy, on 30 November 1961, authorised the Cuba Project, also known as Operation Mongoose, as a campaign of covert actions carried out by the CIA. Leaders in the CIA and the Executive Branch wanted to see a new government in Cuba that would be favourable towards, and live in peace with, its US neighbour. The operation, run out of JM/WAVE, a secret



Lockheed U-2 returning from a flight in 1962 with wingtip pogos already inserted. (Albert Grandolini collection)

The entrance to a Cuban military base, seen in 1961. (Albert Grandolini collection)

intelligence gathering station in Miami, Florida, was headed by US Air Force General Edward Lansdale for the military, and William Harvey for the CIA.

Early nuclear weapons had been designed to be delivered by long-range strategic bomber aircraft, though it was recognised that the bombers could be shot down before they reached their target. With that in mind, both the US and Soviet Union determined to develop a more reliable and effective method of delivering the nuclear weapons. Both countries then determined to use technology, based on German research and scientists captured at the end of the Second World War to develop missiles which could carry nuclear warheads. By 1961 there were enough nuclear warheads to destroy the entire population of the earth. Each country understood that nuclear war between the US and Soviet Union would only reduce both homelands to radioactive wastelands.

In addition, U-2 reconnaissance planes flew regularly over the Soviet Union to gather intelligence on the intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) in their arsenal. By 1962 the Soviet Union could count 36 ICBMs and the US had over 200. A CIA report indicated none of Russia's ICBMs had the capability to reach any American city. When John F. Kennedy assumed office in 1961, the US had more nuclear weapons and more delivery platforms located closer to the Soviet Union.

2
DISRUPTING THE STATUS QUO

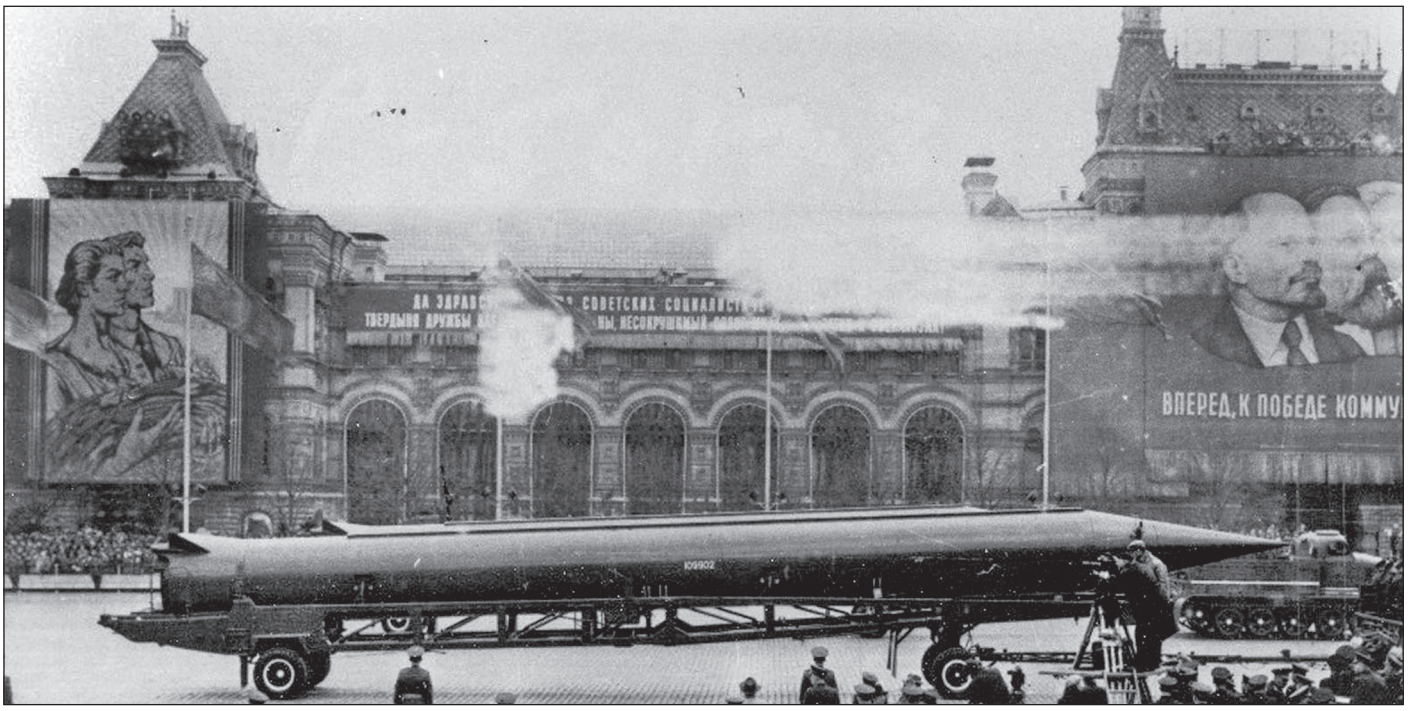
The Bear Has Secret Plans

> 'I had the idea of installing missiles with nuclear warheads in Cuba without letting the US find out they were there until it was too late to do anything about them.' – Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party

Following the Second World War the Soviet Navy was primarily a coastal defensive force. In the early 1960s aggressive ship construction began and the Soviet Navy deployed ships to the far corners of the world. The policies of a formidable admiral, Sergei Gorshkov, dominated naval policy. He promoted the belief that Russia's future was at sea. For more than 25 years Gorshkov influenced naval policy. Contrary to Gorshkov's policy, Nikita Khrushchev decided early in his own time in office to scrap most of the Soviet Navy's surface vessels. Admiral of the Fleet Nikolai Kuznetsov was strongly opposed to the plan which resulted in his removal by Gorshkov. When Khrushchev left office, Gorshkov survived to become an assertive force in the Soviet Navy.

11 January 1961, Project 641, B-37 Submarine, Ekaterininsky Bay

B-37, a Project 641 (NATO designation Foxtrot-class) submarine experienced a torpedo explosion while docked at Polyarny in Ekaterininsky Bay, USSR. The massive explosion killed all 122



An R-12 Dvina medium-range ballistic missile is displayed during the Soviet May Day parade in Moscow, 1962. (Albert Grandolini collection)

USS *Basilone* (DD-824) seen leading a destroyer flotilla of the US Navy. *Basilone* alternated deployments with the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean with deployments in the western Atlantic and Caribbean. (Albert Grandolini collection)

crewmen; two officers of the submarine were at another area of the base and survived. Submarine S-350, a Project 633 (Romeo-class boat), moored next to B-37, sustained massive damage. B-37's anchor flew 1.2 miles (2 kilometres) from the dock. Metal fragments flew over a large area and even landed on homes of navy families nearby. Nearly two years later, with lingering attitudes within the fleet, Defence Minister Rodion Malinovsky now searched for a submarine commander who had the knowledge and experience to lead a flotilla of diesel attack submarines to Mariel, Cuba. While the accident had not highlighted any fundamental design flaw of the Foxtrot subs, sailors tend to be a superstitious lot. This combined with the generally uncomfortable conditions on the boat, a cruise that could bring the flotilla into contact with the US Navy, and the fact that B-37s captain was tried following the disaster, meant that even the most patriotic officer would pause before accepting such an assignment. The minister secretly believed this plan to support a banana republic dictator on the other side of the world to be sheer madness, but he recognised it was not his decision. The naval operation plan called for two gun-armed cruisers, two missile destroyers, two squadrons of mine warfare vessels, seven strategic missile submarines and four long-range diesel attack submarines.

20 February 1962, The White House, Washington, DC

The intelligence community on four occasions had advised the President that the Soviet Union would not make offensive weapons available in Cuba. However, reports had come from agents inside Cuba that indicated the contrary. One report came from

a former employee of the Hilton Hotel in Havana who overheard conversations of Castro officials when they came to the hotel to dine. On another occasion, Castro's pilot, while intoxicated, talked about missiles coming to Cuba from Russia. Some reports, however, were not considered strong enough to even pass on to the President.

Edward Lansdale presented a six-phase plan for Operation Mongoose which would culminate in October 1962 with open revolt and overthrow of the communist regime in Cuba. The plan included political, psychological, military, sabotage and intelligence operations. However, only two days later the plan was scaled down.

14 March 1962, JCS, The Pentagon, Washington, DC

General Maxwell Taylor,[1] Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), drafted guidelines that included the use of the indigenous population in attempt to overthrow Fidel Castro. Taylor's plan recognised that it appeared unlikely Castro could be ousted without direct military intervention.

Members of Joint Chiefs of Staff in conference with President Kennedy. (Albert Grandolini collection)

A Douglas AD-6/A-1 Skyraider attack aircraft of the US Navy. Despite looking as though it belonged to an earlier era of air warfare the Skyraider was still in service in significant numbers with the US Navy and was an aircraft likely to have been used above Cuba in any general conflict there. The type would go on to see extensive service over Vietnam with US and South Vietnamese forces. (Albert Grandolini collection)

A row of F-8Es of the VF-33 and a RF-8A of VFP-62 (second aircraft from the right, number 904) on the deck of USS *Enterprise* (CVAN-65). (Albert Grandolini collection)

An A-4B of attack squadron VA-34, on the deck of the aircraft carrier USS *Saratoga* (CVA-60) in 1959. The A-4, officially designated the Skyhawk though affectionately nicknamed the Scooter, was nuclear-capable despite its diminutive size. (Eisenbarth collection)

10 April 1962, Nikita Khrushchev, in the Crimea

While on vacation in the Crimea, Khrushchev considered the US missiles in Turkey, 375 miles (600 kilometres) from the Soviet border. He contemplated the situation in Cuba and thought of deploying Soviet missiles there. When he returned to Moscow, he met with Deputy Prime Minister Anastas Mikoyan who firmly rejected the idea, but that did not deter Khrushchev. He then met with a group of his closest advisers: Frol Kozlov, Sergei Biryuzov, Andrei Gromyko and Marshal Malinovsky. This group recommended sending a team to Cuba to determine if Castro was interested and would agree to the proposed deployment of missiles on his island.

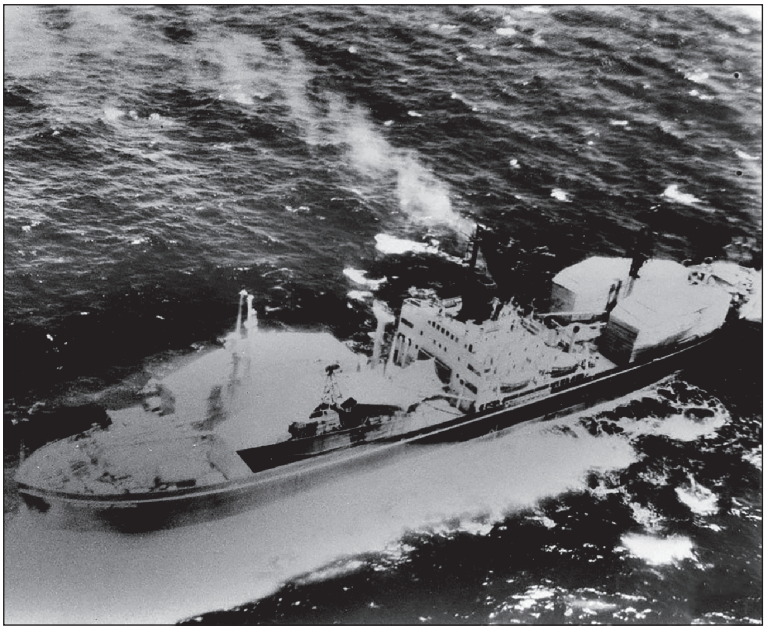
17 April 1962, Istanbul, Turkey

During 1958 and 1959 Jupiter missiles were deployed to Italy and Turkey by the US as a forward strike capability. Thirty missiles were sent to Italy and 15 to Turkey. The US Jupiter missiles in Turkey became fully operational on 17 April 1962 and military personnel on-site reported all positions manned and ready for launch.

2 May 1962, Nikita Khrushchev, the Kremlin, Moscow

Khrushchev informed the new Ambassador to Cuba, Aleksandr Alekseyev, of the proposed plan to put missiles in Cuba. The ambassador expressed great concern for the plan, but Khrushchev

decided Alekseyev and Marshal Biryuzov should make a secret visit to Cuba to propose the idea to Castro. The Premier authorised military officials to decide independently the composition of nuclear forces to be sent to Cuba. Alekseyev and Biryuzov composed a plan to share with Castro. The military plan recommended 24 medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) launchers, and 16 intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) launchers along with a contingent of Soviet combat forces. In addition to the launchers were four regiments of motor rifle troops, 24 advanced SA-2 Guideline surface-to-air missile (SAM) batteries, 42 MiG-21 interceptors, 42 Il-28 (NATO reporting name Beagle) bombers, 12 Komar-class missile boats, and coastal defence cruise missiles.



A Soviet merchant ship en route to Cuba carrying four Komar-class missile boats on the deck. The boats are carried under covers, and an image of a Komer-class boat was superimposed onto the photograph to illustrate what lay below. (Albert Grandolini collection)

A group of Soviet pilots and ground personnel with Cuban troops in front of two MiG-21F-13s of the 32nd/213th Fighter Aviation Regiment, at San Antonio Air Base. (Albert Grandolini collection)

Raul Castro (right) with the commander of the 32nd/213th Fighter Aviation Regiment of the Soviet Air Force, Colonel Nikolay Shibanov. (Albert Grandolini collection)

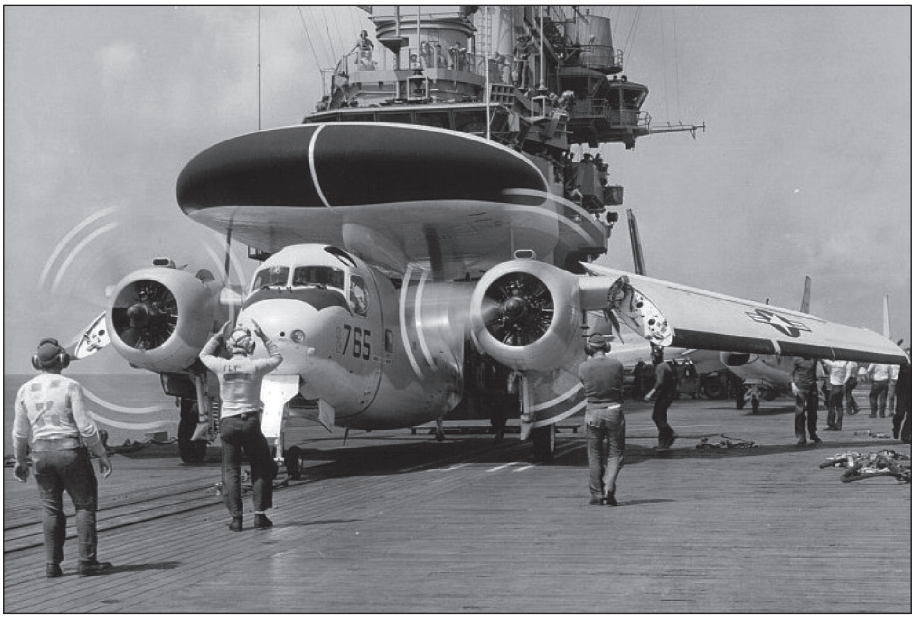
8 May 1962, US Military Conducts Exercise in the Caribbean

Operation Whip Lash, a multiservice exercise to test contingency planning for Cuba, began in the Caribbean, and concluded on 18 May. A further US military exercise, Jupiter Springs, was planned for later in the spring or summer. Soviet and Cuban sources interpreted the series of US military exercises as further evidence of US intentions to invade Cuba.

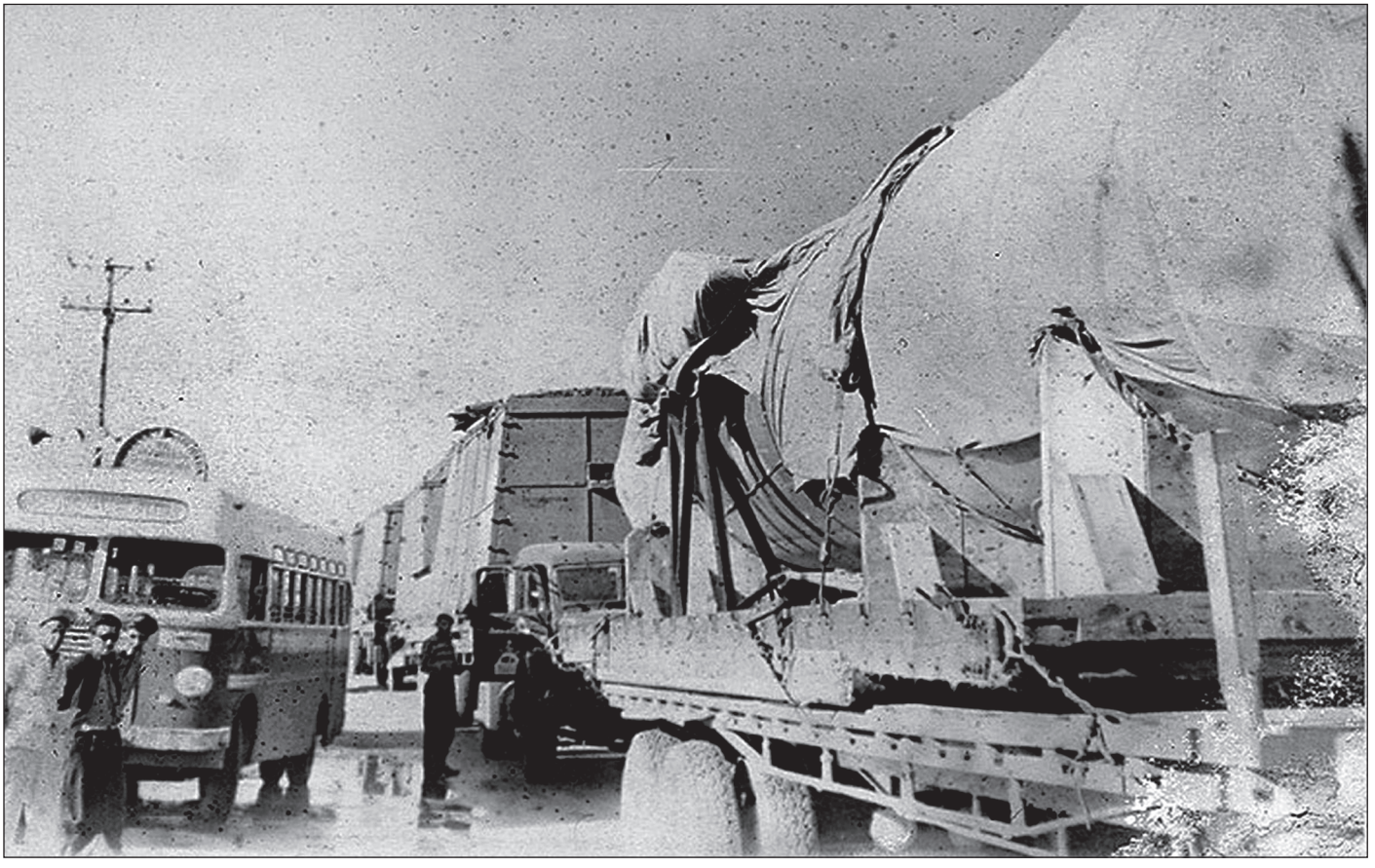
29 May 1962, Soviet Delegation Arrives in Cuba

The Soviet delegation of Sharif Rashidov, alternate member of the Soviet Presidium, Ambassador Aleksandr Alekseyev, and Marshal Sergey Biryuzov along with several military experts arrived in Cuba, allegedly to study irrigation problems in farming communities. After the delegation left the Soviet Union, Khrushchev announced to the entire Presidium plans to deploy nuclear missiles to Cuba. At a meeting with Fidel Castro the day after their arrival, the Soviet officials shared their concern about a possible US invasion of Cuba. They offered to help the island improve its defences and to send nuclear missiles to Cuba. Castro was open to the idea but told the group he wanted to consult with his colleagues before giving a final answer.

One day later, Castro convened a meeting with his inner circle: Raul Castro (Fidel's brother), Che Guevara, Osvaldo Dorticos and Blas Roca. After a discussion of the Soviet offer, Castro told the Soviet officials Cuba would accept the offer of deployment of nuclear weapons.



A Grumman WF-2/T-1 Tracer unfolding its wings from the stored position while preparing for a catapult launch from USS *Hanckock* (CVA-19), in August 1962. Tracers were airborne early warning aircraft that were to play a crucial role during the Cuban Missile Crisis. (US Navy Photo)



Soviet missile equipment seen loaded aboard transport trailers. (Albert Grandolini collection)

2 July 1962, Raul Castro and a Cuban Delegation Arrive in Moscow

A delegation of Cuban military officials led by Raul Castro, travelled to Moscow. They were met by Marshal Rodion Malinovsky and Anastas Mikoyan. After preliminary discussions with Malinovsky and Mikoyan, Raul met with Khrushchev on 3 July to finalise arrangements for the missile deployment. Khrushchev stressed to Raul Castro that the missiles and their operation would be strictly under Soviet military command. Cuba would help with accommodation of the incoming Soviet troops to which Raul agreed.

17 July 1962, Raul Castro and the Cuban Delegation Depart Moscow

Before departure, commitments were made by the Soviets for the scheduled deployment of the nuclear missiles. No public announcement was issued, which led US intelligence agencies to believe the mission to the Soviet Union had failed. Upon his return to Cuba, Raul announced in a meeting that neither internal uprisings nor landings by exiles were a threat to the island, only a US invasion which could be repelled with weapons from a new source.

A female member of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias* FAR), on parade, armed with an old bolt action rifle. (Albert Grandolini collection)

US Marines preparing to board a Fairchild C-119 Packer transport: Marines were expected to be a major part of any potential invasion force. (Albert Grandolini collection)

A pair of Sikorsky H-34 helicopters of the US Marines underway over the Caribbean. (Albert Grandolini collection)

7 July 1962, Grand Kremlin Palace, Moscow, Soviet Union

> 'We should confront the United States with more than words. Missiles would get their attention.' – Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party

Senior military leaders gathered in a secret meeting on 7 July 1962 held in St. George's Hall of the Grand Kremlin Palace. Five reception halls of the palace were named for the orders of the Russian Empire: Orders of St. George, Vladimir, Alexander, Andrew and Catherine. Each hall had been lavishly designed and decorated. St. George's Hall was no exception, decorated with gold embossed stars and insignia with the motto 'For Service and Bravery' prominently displayed on the walls. A huge chandelier hung from a gold painted carved ceiling. Military plaques listing regiments, crews and units which had received the St. George's Colours hung on the walls.

On that summer day, Communist Party Secretary Nikita Khrushchev sat at the head of the table in the ornate room and presided over the meeting. In addition to Soviet officers, Cuban leaders from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and State Security had been invited to

attend. At the opening of the meeting, the Party Secretary emphasised the need for utmost secrecy for the forthcoming plan, called Operation Anadyr, which he directed to be implemented immediately. He reported that the Soviet Union's leaders sought to restore the nuclear balance with the US by placing Russian missiles close to America. The decision then was made to locate their missiles in Cuba. However, in the summer of 1962, as the need for long-range nuclear submarines increased, none were yet in the Soviet inventory. All had been sent to shipyards for installation of backup cooling systems.

26 July 1962, Fidel Castro, Havana, Cuba

As the country celebrated the anniversary of the 26th of July Movement,[2] Fidel stated in a speech to his citizens that the US was determined to invade Cuba. However, he announced that Cuba had received new arms shipments to reinforce their ability to thwart any impending attack.

2 August 1962, Office of Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, Moscow, Soviet Union

Admiral Leonid Rybalko sat comfortably in the Volga sedan driven by a silent chauffeur to the Ministry of Defence. As the admiral exited the vehicle, he shouted to the driver, 'Wait here!' Accustomed to such orders, the driver turned off the car and prepared to wait until the end of time, if necessary. Rybalko, Commander of the Twelfth Submarine Squadron, proceeded through the main entrance en route to the minister's office to receive his orders for a new assignment. He passed the military police guards and returned their sharp salute. Photos lined the corridor of stern-faced heroes from past wars that glared down at visitors. Rybalko paused outside the minister's office and straightened his tunic. He then entered the office without knocking, as was the custom, when the clock sounded the exact time of his appointment.

Rybalko spoke to the minister, 'To your health, Comrade Marshall.' The minister approached to offer a strong handshake.

'Good to see you, Marshal Rodion Malinovsky,' Rybalko responded as required.

The minister directed Rybalko to a chair, but the admiral waited for the senior officer to sit first. The two men congenially chatted about their shared experiences during past wars. Malinovsky shouted across his large office to his executive assistant and aide, 'Bring tea, then leave us.'

As they sat and sipped their tea, the minister announced, 'We are sending you on another adventure.'

Rybalko had a gift for languages and learned Spanish at the Moscow Military Political Institute. His brilliant mind and professional demeanour had served to elevate him to the attention of the upper-level military command officials. One such event occurred when Rybalko's submarine destroyed two Nazi troop ships as they attempted to land. Remarkably, his units seldom suffered mechanical failures as did most others of the Soviet Baltic Fleet. He thought silently: This new assignment might enable him to use his new language skills.

As Defence Minister Malinovsky and Admiral Rybalko sat talking, Fleet Admiral Sergei Gorshkov burst through the door followed by Deputy Commander in Chief, Admiral Vitali Fokin. Malinovsky announced for Gorshkov's benefit, 'Leonid, this is the most independent navy assignment you will ever see.'[3] The four men sat drinking their tea when Malinovsky announced, 'This sugar is the vile Cuban stuff.'

The Soviet Navy, commanded by Admiral Nikolai G. Kuznetsov survived the Second World War with most of its force intact. Admiral of the Fleet, Sergei Georgevich Gorshkov, supported a plan to make the Soviet Union a premier naval force. Following Gorshkov's rise in the ranks of the navy in the Second World War, he became a hero as Commander of the Danube River Flotilla.

Gorshkov nodded to Rybalko and finished by telling the leaders present, 'You alone will command the only Soviet naval forces in the area.'

The fleet admiral reminded Rybalko the special torpedo warheads would be loaded on his submarines in Sayda Bay. Rybalko sat stunned, but silent. He looked to both his superior officers for a reaction.

Rybalko stated, 'You are aware only a few of our submarines have test fired atomic weapons at sea?' He understood that complex weapons systems should not be sent in a submarine to sea until testing had been completed and backup equipment available.

Gorshkov responded dismissively, 'Captain Nikolai Shumkov, commander of B-130, fired two live nuclear torpedoes off Novaya Zemlya.'

'But, we still don't know the effects on the launch platforms or the blast range of the weapons. It is possible we could destroy our own submarines if we fire at an American target.'

Gorshkov did not want to discuss operational details in Minister Malinovsky's office. The minister had no naval background and was only a former tank officer. Gorshkov continued, 'Your orders are firm.' He also reminded everyone he was the operational commander of the mission. He announced details of Rybalko's orders:

1. Do not allow American anti-submarine forces to discover your position.
2. Make sure to arrive in Mariel by 20 October and be ready for the arrival of the seven ballistic missile submarines.
3. Survey the sea around Cuba to ensure no US anti-submarine forces are in the area.
4. Maintain one submarine near the surface to monitor high frequency broadcasts.

Rybalko glanced briefly at the minister who only nodded slightly. Gorshkov observed the look between Rybalko and Malinovsky and became angered. The audacity of the young admiral to question his orders.

Speaking directly to Rybalko, Gorshkov said, 'These orders have been approved by the Politburo and First Secretary and we follow orders. Following your briefing, you will fly to the Northern Fleet Headquarters at Severomorsk. Your brigade commander is Captain Vitali Agafonov.'

Obviously, the political officer network had been very active and reported to Naval Security in the KGB. Rybalko realised this operation would have highest level attention and he was extremely concerned. He had learned these rules of engagement gave his subordinate commanders authority to begin a nuclear war with the Americans. In a breach of protocol, Gorshkov dismissed Rybalko in the minister's office. Regaining control of the assembly, the minister stood and straightened his tunic. He spoke farewell to Rybalko, 'Z'bogm,' meaning 'Go with God.'

To follow through with the duplicity of Operation Anadyr, artic equipment and winter gear was loaded to give the impression the planned operation would be in a cold climate area. In addition to secrecy among the leaders, they lied to the world and the United Nations. An unusual order from Chief of Staff General Zakharov required special pay for all participants of the Cuba operation. Admiral Rybalko had little information of these plans, but he had

formed his own opinion. Even in 1962 with the size of the Anadyr plan, it was quite surprising that even a small part of the plan had not been leaked.

General Issa Pliyev, Commander of the Soviet Army, and his team of experts departed from Moscow enroute to Havana. All officers wore civilian clothes and posed as agriculture, irrigation and drainage experts. The cargo ship, *Maria Ulyanova*,[4] sailed on 15 July from Murmansk bound for the Cuban port of Cabanas. Eighty-five cargo and transport ships loaded with a variety of military equipment departed from ports around the Soviet Union. The Soviet ships passed without more than a casual interest of any American vessels in the general area.

15 August 1962, Premier Nikita Khrushchev and Fidel Castro Sign an Agreement

The Soviet Union and Cuba finalised an agreement between the two countries regarding the defence of Cuba in the event of aggression from other forces.

Article 1: The Soviet Union will send to the Republic of Cuba armed forces to reinforce its defences in the face of danger from external aggression.

Article 2: In the event of aggression, the Soviet Union and the Republic of Cuba will take all necessary measures to repel the aggression.

Article 3: The Soviet Armed Forces and their families stationed there will observe the laws of the Republic of Cuba.

Article 4: The Government of the Soviet Union will assume upkeep costs of Soviet Armed Forces based on the Republic of Cuba.

Article 5: Supplies, equipment and munitions destined for the Soviet Armed Forces, along with the ships assigned for their transportation will have free entry into the territory of Cuba.

Article 6: The Republic of Cuba agrees to provide the Soviet Armed Forces with all services necessary for their installation, basing, communications and mobility.

Article 7: Construction of buildings, airfields, roads, bridges, permanent radio-communications facilities will be undertaken using means and materials of the Soviet Armed Forces.

Article 8: In the event Soviet Armed Forces abandon the military barracks, airfields and other construction, all facilities will be turned over to the Republic of Cuba without any compensation.

Article 9: Matters relating to the presence of Soviet Armed Forces personnel on the territory of the Republic of Cuba will be governed by separate agreements.

Article 10: Military units of each state will be under the command of their respective governments.

Article 11: Regulation of daily matters will be determined by a representative of the Soviet Armed Forces and the Republic of Cuba.

Article 12: This agreement will be submitted for ratification by each respective government.

Article 13: This agreement is valid for a five-year term.

Article 14: At the conclusion of this agreement, the Soviet Armed Forces will abandon the territory of the Republic of Cuba. The government of the Republic of Cuba will furnish all aid necessary for the evacuation of Soviet Armed Forces from the territory of the Republic of Cuba.

The agreement was certified with the signatures of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Cuba Fidel Castro Ruz and President of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics N.S. Khrushchev.

Fidel Castro and Nikita Khrushchev standing in front of Lenin's tomb in Moscow. Just two years after the events of the Cuban Missile Crisis Khruschev would be ousted and replaced by Leonid Brezhnev, seen here on the right edge of the photograph. (Albert Grandolini collection)

Fidel Castro inspecting an FAR-operated KS-19 100mm antiaircraft gun of Soviet origin. (Albert Grandolini collection)

23 August 1962, the Executive Committee (ExComm) Meeting, The White House, Washington, DC

While John McCone expressed great concern for the military buildup in Cuba, Dean Rusk and Robert McNamara argued against McCone's interpretation. President Kennedy directed a contingency plan be developed to deal with the impending situation in Cuba. His instructions were formalised in National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) #181 issued 23 August. Kennedy ordered an amendment to Operation Mongoose be developed immediately identified as 'Plan B Plus' to overthrow Castro without overt US military forces.

A US Navy Douglas JD-1 utility aircraft derived from the A-26 Invader. (Albert Grandolini collection)

29 August 1962, US U-2 Reconnaissance Flight over Cuba

A U-2 flight provided conclusive evidence of SA-2 SAM missile sites at eight locations around Cuba. Later flights photographed coastal defence cruise missile installations for the first time. However, photography of the area around San Cristobal where the first missiles would later be spotted, showed no evidence of them at this time. Recon flights also identified Soviet MiG-21s and Il-28 bomber aircraft.

30 August 1962, Che Guevara Meets With Nikita Khrushchev, Moscow, Soviet Union

Che Guevara, Minister of Industries of Cuba, and Emilio Aragones Navarro, a close associate of Fidel Castro, met with Nikita Khrushchev at his dacha in Crimea. Guevara delivered Castro's amendments to the agreement the two leaders had signed on 15 August regarding the deployment of missiles in Cuba. Che requested the agreement be announced publicly which the Premier declined. In fact, he never signed the amendment delivered by Che from Castro.

By September 1962, the Soviet Navy had shipped spare parts, ammunition, and missiles to Cuba. Division Commander Major General Igor Statsenko understood the need for loading the equipment and troops in total secrecy. The Navy recommended his cargo ships be loaded at Sevastopol, on the Black Sea in Crimea. The area was off limits to all non-military personnel and foreigners. Missiles and concrete launch pads were loaded on the merchant ship *Poltava*.[5] Several thousand troops filled the lowest deck in poorly ventilated sections. The sailing phase passed successfully without attracting attention of aircraft overhead.

The Soviet vessels SS *Indigirki* and SS *Aleksandrovsk* launched from Severomorsk and entered Mariel harbour within 18 days. Both ships sailed without causing alarm, but they were photographed by US U-2 reconnaissance aircraft. During the first week of September, Soviet motor rifle troops began to arrive in Cuba, along with others, however, US intelligence did not identify these units until the second week of October.

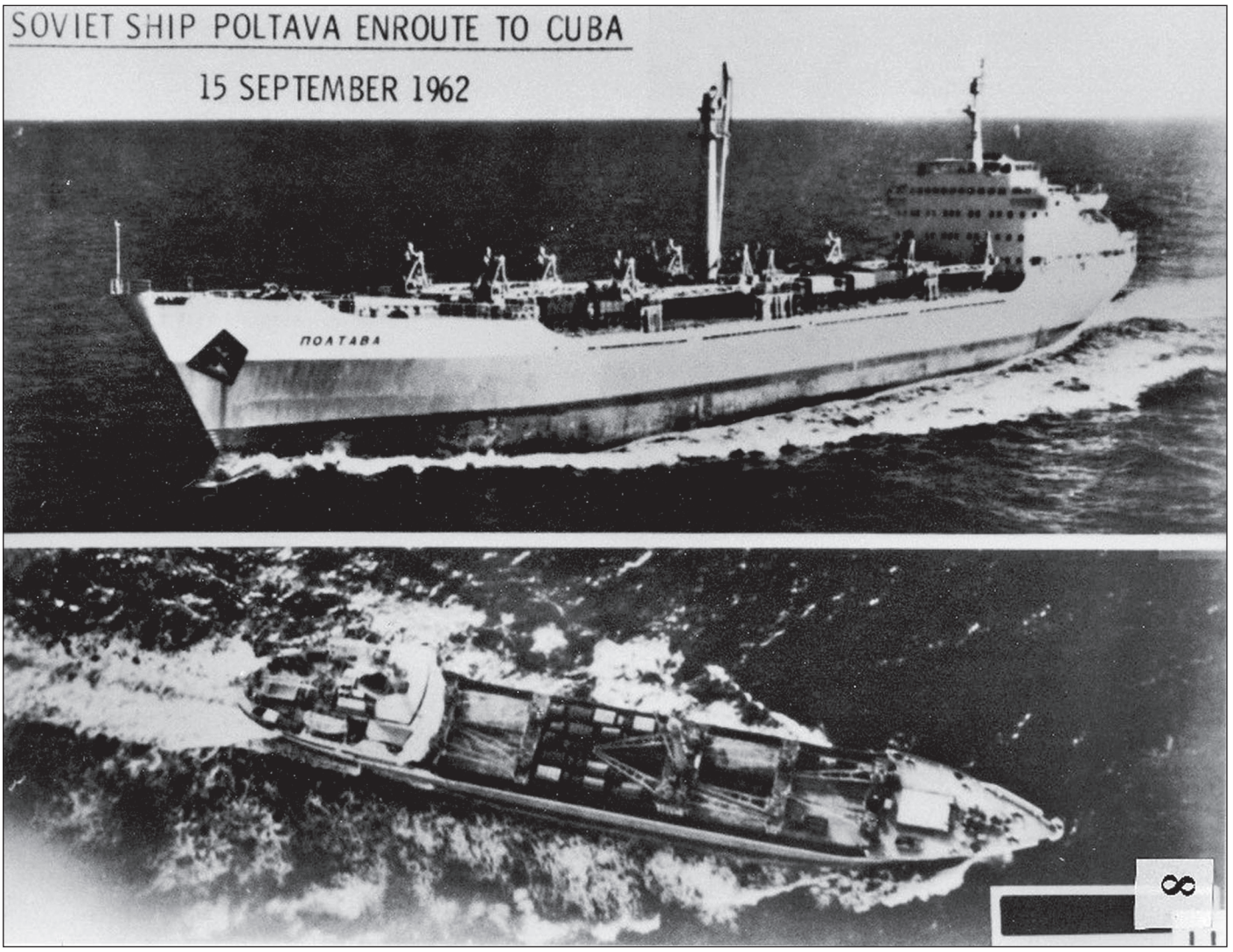
10 September 1962, Monday, The White House and The Pentagon, Washington, DC

Secretary of State Dean Rusk and National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy recommended against sending more U-2 flights over Cuba as they believed the rewards were not worth the risk. President Kennedy, however, ordered U-2 missions be flown over the sea around Cuba. Photos taken the same day revealed the Soviet freighter *Kasimov* sailing toward Cuba with Ilyushin Il-28 medium-range bombers on its deck.

As US military leaders observed increased activity in the Caribbean, they also reviewed contingency plans for a military offensive. US Navy Lockheed P-2 Neptune long-range surveillance aircraft, and US Air Force U-2 reconnaissance flights continued to fly over the island. In addition, the USAF added a Boeing RB-47 Stratojet to the mix for closer inspection of the merchant ships. In the coming weeks, the Navy assumed the worst-case scenario and plans for anti-submarine warfare (ASW) increased.

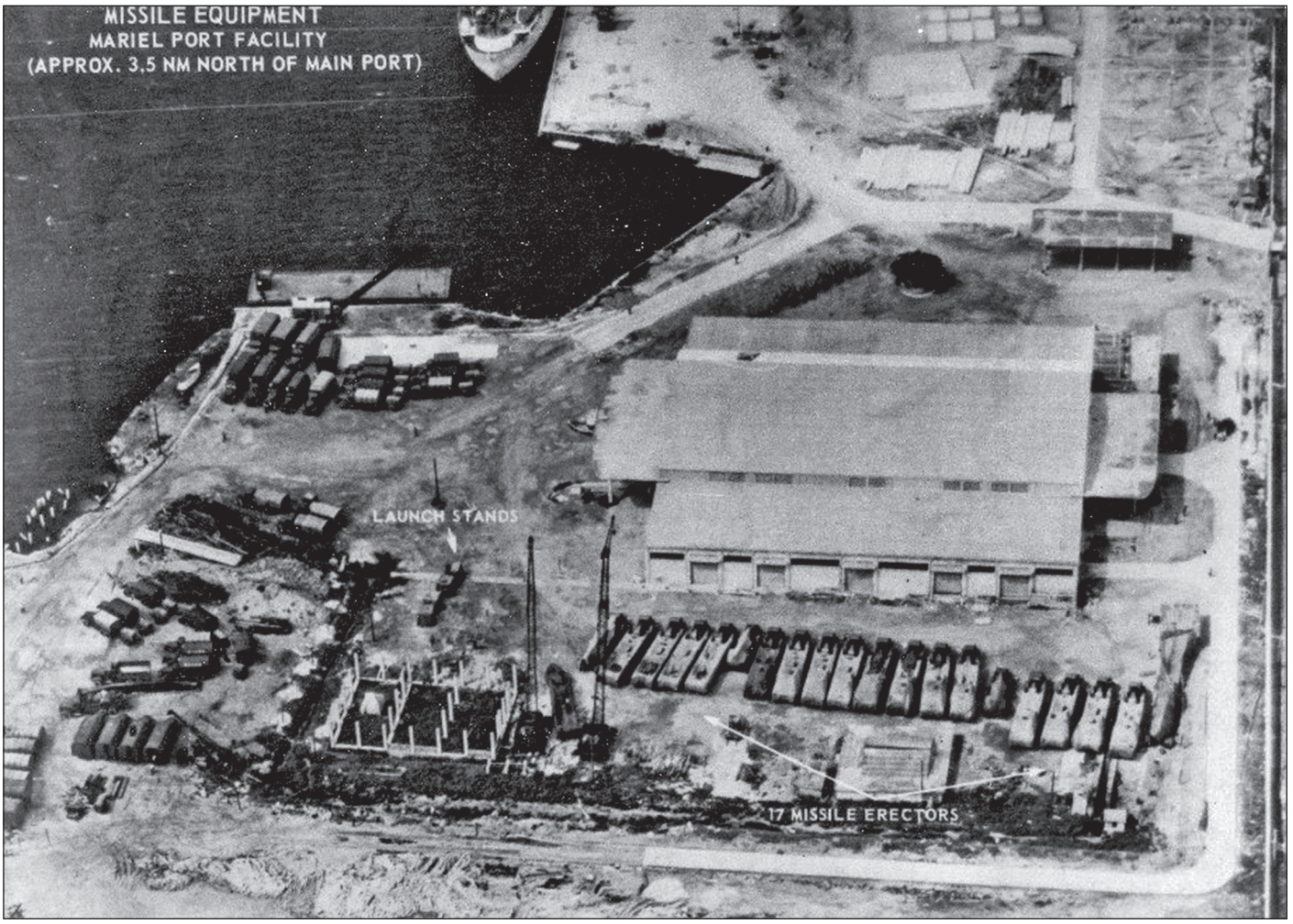
The US acknowledged the Soviets had a large quantity of diesel attack submarines. Military leaders now believed the Soviet Navy also possessed nuclear-powered attack and cruise missile submarines. However, there had been no intelligence regarding successful testing of their missiles.

A USAF U-2 pilot poses with the aircraft's ground crew. (Albert Grandolini collection)

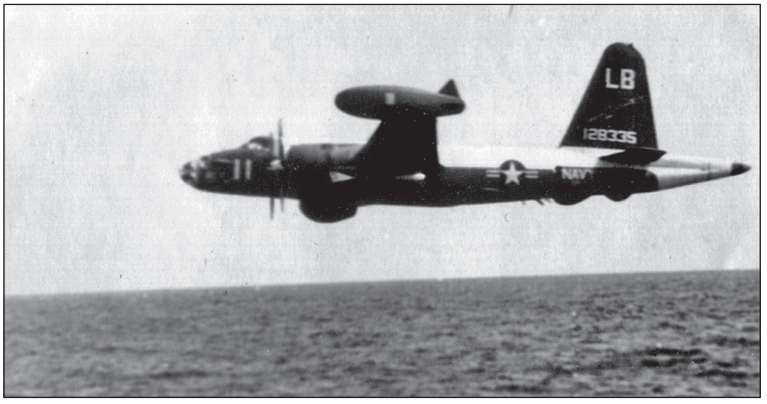


The Soviet merchant *Poltava* enroute to Cuba 15 September 1962. (Albert Grandolini collection)

A reconnaissance photograph of a Soviet merchant in the port of Mariel, Cuba. (Albert Grandolini collection)

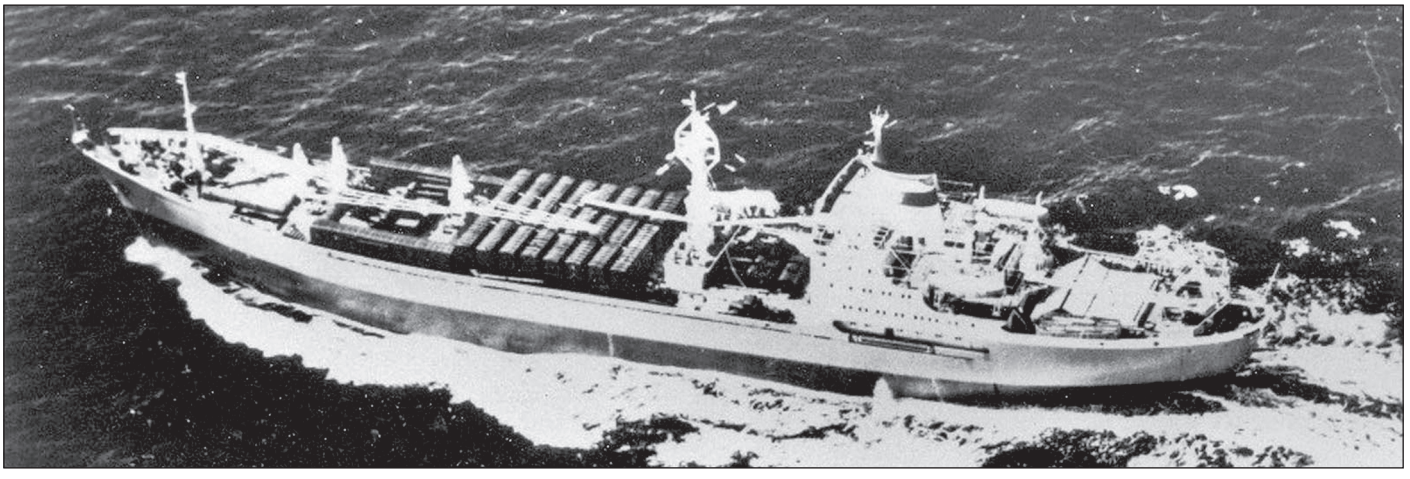


A reconnaissance photograph of the unloaded Soviet missile equipment, taken approximately 3.5 miles north of the main port of Mariel in September 1962. (Albert Grandolini collection)



Left: A P-2E (previously P2V-5) aircraft of US Navy patrol squadron VP-7 (see colour section for details), photographed making a low pass by a Soviet merchant ship carrying troops towards Cuba. (Albert Grandolini collection)

Below: The Soviet ship *Kasimov* with Il-28 bomber fuselages in crates, photographed en route to Cuba on 28 September 1962. (Albert Grandolini collection)



12 September 1962, USS Blandy (DD-943) Prepares To Sail

To provide closer inspection, the US Navy assigned a destroyer to proceed to the area. The USS *Blandy* (DD-943), named for Admiral William H. P. Blandy, launched in Quincy, Massachusetts on 19 December 1956. The destroyer's sponsor, Mrs. Hope Blandy Lee, the admiral's daughter, commissioned the ship on 26 November 1957. The *Blandy* featured new characteristics such as a superstructure made of aluminium. In addition, air conditioning was installed throughout the ship. The ship had a flared bow which greatly improved the voyage and reduced the pitching in rough seas. *Blandy's* weapons included depth charges, Mark 32 triple torpedo launchers, and two Hedgehog ASW rocket launchers.

Blandy's crew had a staff of 23 officers, 19 chief petty officers and 350 sailors of various enlisted ranks. The vessel's propulsion system included four D-type Foster Wheeler steam boilers which proved to be the strongest plants in the fleet. Commander Edward G. Kelley enjoyed a reputation as one of the best officers in ASW of the Atlantic Fleet. The Executive Officer (XO) of the *Blandy,* Rodion Cantacuzene, demanded the ship be kept spotless.[6] The crew spent countless hours sweeping, polishing brass and painting. The mysterious dark spaces in the bowels of the ship were manned by the ship's engineers, nicknamed 'Snipes.' They spent most of their working hours in the engine fire rooms, which smelled of hot lube oil, strong coffee and polishing compound. *Blandy* earned a reputation for excellence performing operations onboard the ship. The ship excelled at squadron close order tactics, an event which consisted of several destroyers in close formation sailing at 25 knots while performing manoeuvres called flanking turns, column turns and anti-submarine screening. The manoeuvres could be extremely exhilarating and terrifying at the same time.[7]

While the destroyers performed the anti-submarine screen manoeuvres, an aircraft carrier, the USS *Essex* (LHD-2), would turn into the wind frequently for aircraft to launch or land on deck. Routine procedures required a 'dark ship' which meant no running lights and complete electronic silence. The unexpected appearance of Captain Kelley on the bridge would strike fear and anxiety in the Officer of the Deck (OOD) and the Junior Officer of the Deck (JOOD). After a barrage of profanity combined with Kelley's smoker's cough, the OOD caught the receiving end of a barrage of verbal expletives. Kelley then turned and marched back in the direction from where he came. Condition One Anti-Submarine (AS, as compared to General Quarters for ASW) designated readiness conditions and the OOD on the bridge held the coveted position that only the most experienced officers could handle.[8]

On an ordinary quiet afternoon aboard *Blandy,* chaos broke out quickly when the Sonar Watch shouted, 'Bridge, Sonar, contact bearing zero five zero, range unknown.' The JOOD barely grasped what had occurred when Captain Kelley's arm pressed the comm switch and shouted, 'Roger, Sonar, classification?' As was typical when Sonar indicated contact, Kelley joined the officers on the bridge. In a flash, he shouted, 'I've got the con. Right full rudder turns for 25 knots. Set Condition One anti-submarine.' When Condition AS was declared, the young officers onboard hurried to their designated stations. Sonar on the fourth deck below hummed continuously with the sound of electronic equipment in the air-conditioned room.[9]

Two petty officers wearing heavy coats to ward off the extreme cold in the room operated the sonar console and the receiver that showed a false contact, sea life or a submarine. The petty officers' role soon rose in importance. During this time, a talker on the sound-powered phone system provided the communication link with what was called 'The Holy Place' or Sonar and the bridge called 'The Citadel.'[10] A petty officer frequently held the position of talker until Kelley took command, and he designated a junior officer. As activity increased, the number of people on the bridge did as well. Most of those present knew how to stay out of Kelley's space and observed his rule of complete silence.

Soviet submarines had seldom been observed in the Atlantic prior to 1962. The hunter-killer destroyers coordinated with patrol aircraft and even spotting a Soviet submarine had been rare. The ASW Lockheed P-2 Neptune aircraft were the mainstay of the patrol fleet for many years.

Lockheed developed the P2V Neptune (later redesignated P-2 in 1962) in 1945 to replace the PV-1 Ventura and PV-2 Harpoon. The P-2 was the only land-based patrol aircraft designed to hunt submarines and was later replaced by the P-3 Orion introduced in 1962. Both the P-2 and the P-3 served to patrol over large ocean areas using disposable sonobuoys. The buoys housed hydrophones that could hear a submarine or surface ship and subsequently transmit the signal to aircraft nearby.

An elevated view of the aircraft carrier USS *Essex* (CVS-9), after he modification for anti-submarine purposes. Visible on the deck are Grumman S2F Tracker (redesignated to S-2 in September 1962), and a Sikorsky HSS-1 helicopter (redesignated to SH-34 in September 1962). (Albert Grandolini collection)

A Grumman S-2 Tracker anti-submarine aircraft seen while operating from a shore base. This photograph shows the position of the various markings carried by this US Navy sub-hunting aircraft. (Jim Hawkins collection via Dennis Jenkins)

Detection capabilities were also available aboard the small tactical ASW aircraft deployed onboard hunter-killer carriers, such as the USS *Essex*, in the form of a squadron of Grumman S-2F Trackers. Trackers and P-2 and P-3 long-range patrols became a challenge to Soviet submarines of the time, especially the diesel-powered vessels that needed to surface or snorkel periodically to charge their batteries.[11]

In late summer of 1962, while participating in an exercise in the Ionian Sea, between Greece and Malta, *Blandy* made sonar contact. As an example of his expertise, Admiral Kelley took control of the ship from the helmsman and turned the ship in pursuit of the submarine. Though armed with three five-inch/54-caliber gun mounts, *Blandy's* main weapon was its ASW offensive equipment and electronics. As part of the exercise, *Blandy* assumed contact on a US nuclear attack submarine designated as the target for an eight-destroyer squadron. *Blandy* held contact for three hours until the officer in charge declared an end to the exercise.

Commodore Morrison ordered *Blandy* to break contact allowing the submarine to proceed to its designated area. The story became legend among the sailors for years to come. Another story of some note involved the exercise commander who ordered a submarine to initiate running lights. When Kelley turned the vessel to a safety course, he peered over the side of his ship and spotted the submarine 50 feet directly below.

11 September 1962, TASS Released a Report from the Soviet Government.

An authorised statement from the official Soviet news agency TASS condemned US overseas military bases and denied any plan to introduce offensive weapons to Cuba. Arms and equipment sent to Cuba were only for defensive purposes.

Soviet Submarines En Route to Cuba

In mid-September 1962, R-12 medium-range Dvina missiles (NATO reporting name SS-4 Sandal) and Il-28D medium-range bombers were already in Cuba. The R-12 had a range of 1,050 miles (1,689 kilometres) and the Il-28D had a range of 600 miles (965 kilometres). The Soviets also deployed shore-based coastal defence anti-ship missiles in Cuba: these were the nuclear-armed FKR-1 (NATO reporting name SSC-2a Salish), although misidentified by US intelligence as the conventionally-armed Sopka (NATO reporting name SSC-2b Samlet).

Soviet troops unloaded the first medium-range bombers in Cuba at San Julian Air Base. Although only six nuclear bombs were at the air base, the remainder had been located with the Luna (NATO reporting name FROG-5) short-range tactical missiles and Sopka coastal defence missiles. By late September, the Soviet Navy had sent 129 cargo loads of equipment bound for Cuba.

On 18 September a US Navy ship in the Mediterranean Sea stopped a Soviet merchant vessel and inquired about his cargo. The Soviet captain replied, 'Agricultural machinery.' The US captain reported inconsistencies with the deck cargo which appeared to be aircraft parts. US ships and reconnaissance flights had shown more interest in the large vessels bound for Cuba. Efforts to identify the ships' cargo such as aircraft, trucks and armoured personnel carriers parked on the decks became critically important. Many of the cartons on deck could not be covered completely. When the Soviet captains departed from their port, they did not know their destination. They were only told to head toward the Azores Islands, an autonomous region of Portugal, in the mid-Atlantic and to open sealed envelopes at a designated point enroute. Instructions would give details to continue to a designated port in Cuba.

19 September 1962, Intelligence Report Delivered to ExComm, The White House, Washington, DC

The US Intelligence Board (USIB) reported in Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) 85-3-62 ongoing deployment of nuclear missiles to Cuba. Two large-hatch lumber ships appeared to be riding high in the water, a suggestion they carried military cargo.

On 19 September 1962, Admiral Gorshkov notified Minister of Defence Malinovsky of an intelligence report indicating North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) operation named Fallex 62 in Europe, the Mediterranean and North Atlantic. To the alarm of the Soviets, the US Navy increased activity in the Atlantic and conducted

A Soviet FKR-1 coastal defence missile ready for action in Cuba: US intelligence analysists misidentified it as the conventionally-armed Sopka, thus missing the fact that the Soviets eventually deployed 80 nuclear warheads for FKR-1s to Cuba. (Albert Grandolini collection)

Along with the various missile systems deployed to Cuba, the Soviet brought much ancillary equipment including this radar installation (left) and meteorological station (right) to support the FKR-1 and Sopka coastal defence missile systems. (Albert Grandolini collection)

a large-scale exercise code named Operation Ortsac (Castro spelled backwards) on Vieques, an island off Puerto Rico's eastern coast.

19 September 1962, Premier Nikita Khrukshchev, Moscow, Soviet Union

Khrushchev authorised a message to be sent to all Soviet merchant vessels: Any overt attack against Soviet ships is an act of aggression against the USSR. Ship commander is authorised to return fire.

21 September 1962, the United Nations General Assembly, New York, NY

At a speech to the General Assembly, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko charged the US with creating hysteria and threatening to invade Cuba. He denied Cuba was building a combat force to pose a threat to the US or any location in the Western Hemisphere. Gromyko further warned any attack by the US on the nation of Cuba or a Cuba-bound vessel would be interpreted as an act of war.

On 25 September Soviet Defence Council authorised deployment of combat assets to the Atlantic in a show of force against US naval ships. The US had become concerned about the large number of merchant ships headed toward Cuba. However, Khrushchev and Malinovsky cancelled the plan to deploy surface ships overriding Gorshkov's orders. They believed the Americans in the area would react with force.

The Soviet Maritime Ministry transmitted a message to the merchant ships giving instructions should one or more vessels be attacked: If your ship is attacked or boarded by foreign agents, you are ordered to destroy all military and state documents. Resist the attack or boarding of your vessel. If necessary, sink the ship and save the crew according to directives of the Maritime Fleet.

1 October 1962, Sayda Bay, the Kola Peninsula, Soviet Union

> 'Each of you has in your hands the potential to start the next world war. So, Comrades, do try to keep us out of war.' – Admiral Leonid F. Rybalko

The Sixty-Ninth Torpedo Submarine Brigade was composed of four Foxtrot submarines, B-4, B-36, B-59 and B-130. Captain Second Rank Valentin Savitsky directed lines cast off from the pier at Sayda Bay on the Kola Peninsula northwest of Murmansk and submarine B-59 moved out to sea. B-36 commanded by Captain Second Rank Aleksei Dubivko followed. Submarine B-130 commanded by Nickolai Shumkov also followed and B-4 led by Captain Ryurik Ketov sailed last. Shumkov saw the charts delivered to his vessel by the duty officer which showed clearly the North Atlantic area down to the Caribbean. Shumkov believed their destination was Cuba.

1 October 1962, Captain Nickolai Shumkov, B-130, in the Barents Sea

Captain Shumkov stood near Torpedo Officer Lieutenant Volodya Voronov as the younger man watched the radar while the vessel moved through the channel out to sea. Radio and Electronics Division Chief, Lieutenant Cheprakov, relied heavily on his warrant officers for disassembly and repair of equipment. Cheprakov supervised five English-speaking radio intercept operators who monitored US voice radio messages when his submarine neared the surface to raise an antenna. The crew liked listening to US radio transmissions and Voice of America programs which featured jazz music they all loved. Though such programs were not part of their agenda and not approved, they did so discreetly.

Voronov had experience navigating the channel but never in fog at near zero visibility and never at night. Cheprakov waited nervously. As the vessel entered the open water of the Barents Sea, the depth fell to over 100 fathoms at which time they would dive lower.[12] His orders required him to then deliver a sealed envelope to Shumkov from the communications safe. The captain read the message in the presence of Cheprakov, the ship's executive officer and the political officer.

Behind Shumkov in B-130, Ketov's B-4 carried Brigade Commander Agafonov. Shumkov and Dubivko considered themselves fortunate they had no senior staff officers onboard. However, the staff engineer was assigned to Dubivko on B-36.

Though only two years old B-130 had a history of mechanical issues and hairline cracks in two main diesel engine auxiliary dive gears. The repairs had been rescheduled for the next overhaul and B-130 now declared seaworthy. Shumkov knew of the cracks and worried they could become worse. In addition, Chief Engineer, Senior Lieutenant Viktor Parskin had warned Shumkov the batteries exceeded normal life and should be replaced. The captain had confidence in the engineer. Shumkov knew he was taking a huge risk, but his submarine could have been removed from the deployment and replaced with another. He did not want to miss this mission.

Tranquil seas and calm winds kept the thick fog on the Kola coast. Shumkov gave the order to begin the dive. All onboard had their own assignments and began preparing the ship for the dive at nine knots. Shumkov took his place at the command post where he ordered complete silence and waited for the submarine to settle at 393 feet (120 metres).

Shumkov met in the navigation room with his deputy Frolov, Political Officer Saparov and Lieutenant Cheprakov. All the officers stood around a table where a large collection of charts had been stacked, many more than for a routine patrol. Copies of the same charts were delivered to the other three submarine commanders. The effort to maintain secrecy of this mission reached a state of ridiculousness considering that the crew members' wives in Polyarny had been studying Spanish for their own trip to the Caribbean where they expected to meet their spouses.

Shumkov ordered, 'Cheprakov, open the safe and bring out the sealed envelope.' Cheprakov gave the large envelope to Executive Officer Frolov. The envelope had been sealed and displayed wide red strips that indicated Secret documents. He opened the envelope and handed a bound book to the captain. Kama, the code name for the naval portion of Operation Anadyr, was prominently displayed in large print.

Shumkov opened the book and read:

> The mission of the submariners in Operation Kama is to reconnoitre the approaches to Mariel, to accurately log the acoustic conditions in the outer approaches and to enter Port Mariel to prepare for arrival of the four ballistic missile submarines from the sister division of Polyarny's Fourth Squadron. Upon the arrival in Mariel, the new organization will be designated the Twentieth Special Squadron.

He continued reading:

> The overall mission of the internationalist intervention on behalf of the Socialist Republic of Cuba is to equip the country with sufficient Soviet armed support to deter further aggression by the United States of America, and to further thwart a repeat of the ill-fated invasion of Cuba, which was attempted in 1961 by anti-socialist, anti-Castro lackeys supported by the American CIA and Navy.

Shumkov silently considered what he read. The route required the submarines to travel at nine knots speed while simultaneously evading US hydroacoustic arrays. One additional sheet of paper in the package contained the rules of engagement, three directives described the circumstances and conditions in which force would be applied.

5 October 1962, Soviet Politburo, Moscow, Soviet Union

The Soviet Politburo granted General Issa Pliyev authority to launch nuclear weapons against the US without approval from Moscow. General Anatoly Gribkov, Chief of Operational Planning of the Soviet General Staff, had directed placement of medium-range SS-4 missiles in Cuba. Four Soviet submarines, part of Operation Anadyr, made up the advance phase and were equipped with nuclear-tipped torpedoes in Sayda Bay, on the Kola Peninsula. The Soviet Navy would be operating in a hemisphere where the US held the advantage.

As a non-sailor, Communist Party First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev did not favour a strong surface naval force, especially after the explosion of the 24,000-ton battleship *Novorossysk* in Sevastopol Harbour. The former Italian battleship claimed the lives of 608 Soviet sailors when it capsized following an explosion on 29 October 1955. In the wake of the loss of the *Novorossysk*, Khrushchev demoted Admiral Kuznetsov and promoted Admiral Gorshkov to replace him as Commander in Chief.

However, Khrushchev supported a strong submarine force, a coastal defence surface fleet and a massive ground force. His reduction of the Soviet fleet seriously impacted the readiness of the navy. It resulted in a remaining force of fewer than 500,000 sailors, and 350 ships were decommissioned. With a possible confrontation in Cuba, the Soviet Navy could not even assemble two cruisers to escort the submarines of the Northern Fleet being readied in Polyarny. The nuclear-powered submarines Admiral Gorshkov expected to be ready by 1960 had failed all engineering tests. The vessels sat gathering dust in Severodvinsk docks, north of Arkhangelsk Oblast. This was combined with a lack of trained officers and sufficient materials for construction of new submarines had not been ordered for the accelerated plan to keep pace with the US nuclear submarine threat.

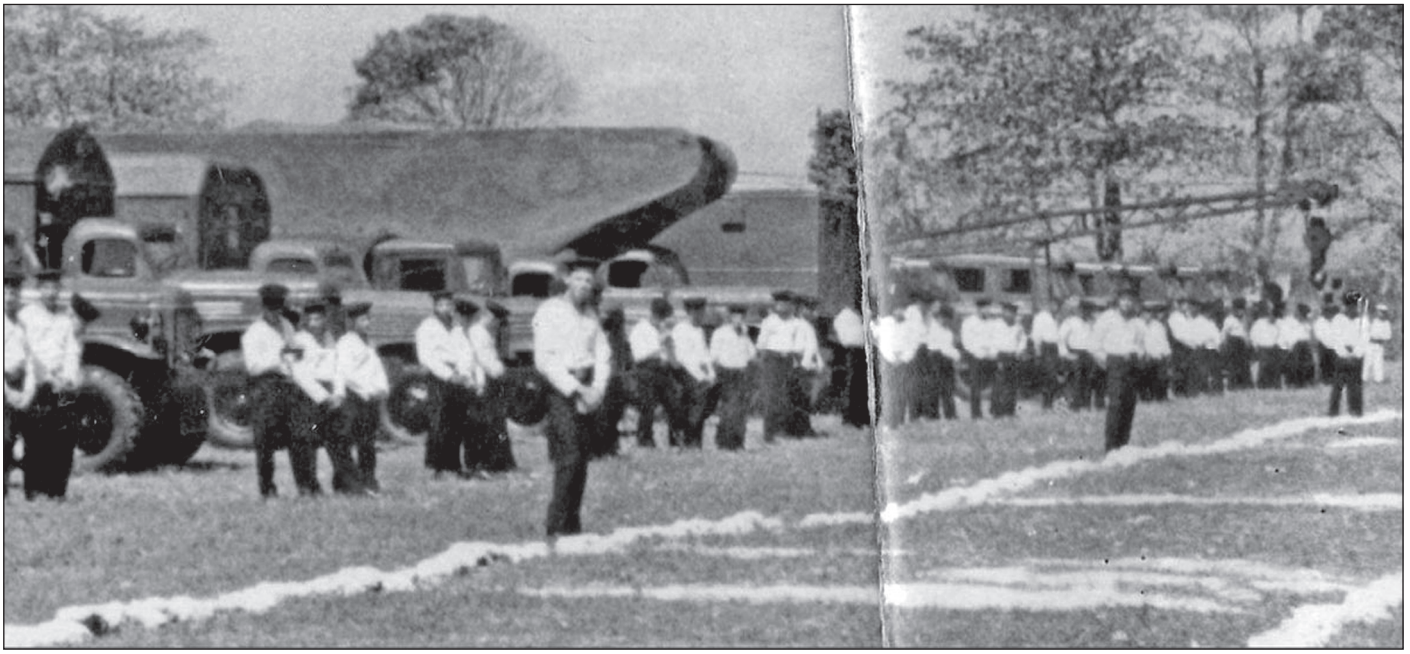
Gorshkov led the defensive fleet into the nuclear era. Existing battleships, cruisers and even unfinished vessels under construction were declared ready for the scrap heap. In a surprising turn of opinion, Khrushchev blasted Gorshkov for a lack of escort vessels available for the mission to Cuba. When Gorshkov responded that Khrushchev himself had ordered them scrapped, the First Secretary countered, 'I ordered no such thing!' He also denied firing Admiral Kuznetsov. It was in this unstable contentious atmosphere that the deployment of medium-range bombers and motor rifle troops began under Operation Anadyr.

During the expansion of the new Soviet Navy, increased numbers of submarines came off the assembly constructed of newer and lighter materials. As a result of the rushed construction of the new submarines, many accidents resulted.[13]

Project 613 (NATO reporting name Whiskey-class) was a class of diesel electric attack submarines constructed by the Soviet Union early in the Cold War period. Project 613 submarine S-80 was lost due to accidental flooding. A valve that should have prevented water from entering the snorkel while the vessel was submerged did not work properly, the diesel engines failed and the entire crew of 68 died of carbon dioxide poisoning. The vessel was located at the bottom of the Barents Sea some years later.

Project 658 (NATO reporting name Hotel I-class) K-19, the first Soviet nuclear-powered strategic missile submarine, experienced a reactor failure on the first missile-firing voyage. In an altered film on television, Soviet citizens saw a missile launched while the submarine was submerged. Rybalko was shocked when he saw the film; he knew K-19 could only fire while on the surface. The Soviet leadership had no idea the missile launch had failed.[14]

Vasily Arkhipov, well educated, thoughtful and intelligent, had few options available to him in his small farming village outside Moscow. He then looked to a career in the military service and was accepted at age 16 to the Leningrad Naval Special School. When Nazi forces overran Leningrad in 1941, his entire class transferred to the Kirov Caspian Higher Naval School in Baku. As the Soviets halted the Nazi advance in November 1942, Vasily and his classmates were allowed to remain in Baku. In August 1945 Arkipov received orders to board a minesweeper to patrol the Sea of Japan. After a short, uneventful tour, he returned to Baku for advanced training.



A line-up of one of the Soviet units deployed to Cuba, seen waiting for inspection by their superiors. (Albert Grandolini collection)

Senior military leaders recognised his professionalism and abilities and invited him to join the Communist Party. Once he accepted the invitation, his promotions came quite rapidly.

In July 1961, at age 35, Arkhipov was assigned as the Deputy Commander/Executive Officer of K-19. There had been several fatal accidents during the construction of K-19. Rushed construction and flawed decisions during the process led to K-19 being a disaster in the making. Before the vessel was even commissioned, a fire broke out in the area where ballast tanks were being assembled and three workers were killed. Six additional workers died inhaling fumes from glue they applied to the rubber lining of a water cistern. A young sailor was killed when a hatch slammed shut on him as he loaded one of the submarine's ballistic missiles. With so many accidents, K-19 was nicknamed 'Hiroshima'. One of the results of the rushed construction involved the lack of a backup reactor cooling system.

As K-19 crossed the North Atlantic in July 1961, one of the 70-megawatt pressurised water reactors lost its primary cooling system. With no backup cooling, the onboard engineers rigged a system from supplies they found on the submarine. The engineers wore only light protection suits and oxygen breathing masks. They sealed their fates by entering the reactor compartment and became exposed to lethal radiation. Captain Nikolai Zateyev successfully calmed the understandably restive crew and held off any possibility of a mutiny. Eight engineering crew died within a month and a further 15 of the boat's crew would die in the following two years.

After the submarine returned to its home port, the entire propulsion system was replaced. The K-19 episode had been successfully concealed from the Soviet Main Navy Staff. Sailors who died from exposure to radiation were buried in secret graves and their families told they had died in the line of duty. Arkipov survived the disaster along with other members of the officer staff and subsequently distinguished himself onboard submarine B-59 headed to Mariel, Cuba.[15]

6 October 1962, US Navy Commander in Chief (CINC), Atlantic Fleet

The CINC directed increased readiness in preparation for an invasion of Cuba. On 1 October CINC Atlantic Fleet Admiral Robert L. Dennison ordered the execution of Operation Plan (Oplan) 312, the airstrike on Cuba. The prepositioning of troops, aircraft, ships and other support equipment increased readiness for a full invasion.

7 October 1962, Soviet Ministry of Defence, Moscow, Soviet Union

The *Kraznaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*) newspaper reported Soviet armed forces had been placed on alert, but no further details or reason were given.

8 October 1962, President of Cuba, UN General Assembly, New York, NY

President of Cuba, Osvaldo Dorticos, in a speech to the General Assembly, called on the UN to condemn the US trade embargo against Cuba. He stated, 'If we are attacked, we will defend ourselves. We indeed have weapons to do so.'

UN Secretary-General U Thant sent a message to President Kennedy expressing the interests of member nations: 'Our member nations believe in the interest of peace and security that everyone concerned avoid any situation which could risk a war.'

11 October 1962, US Atlantic Fleet Command, Norfolk, Virginia

Aircraft carrier USS *Independence* (LCS-2) set sail from Norfolk, Virginia with destroyer escorts USS *English* (DD-696), USS *Hank* (DD-702), USS *O'Hare* (DD-889) and USS *Cory* (DD-463). The Second Marine Air Wing deployed on 13 October from Naval Station Key West. The US Army and Air Force directed supplies to the southern states of Louisiana, Texas and Alabama for easier access to a seaport.

11 October 1962, Nikita Khrushchev, the Kremlin, Moscow, Soviet Union

Khrushchev became angry with the Soviet Union's inability to match the nuclear arsenal of the US and by the placement of nuclear missiles in Turkey by the US. The Premier then determined to put pressure on the US by increasing support for Cuba. Once missile sites were operational in Cuba, strikes against any city in the US and Canada became a real possibility.

An LTV F8U-1P/RF-8A of VFP-62, at the start of a catapult launch from USS *Independence* (CVA-62) in 1959. (US Navy Photo)

3

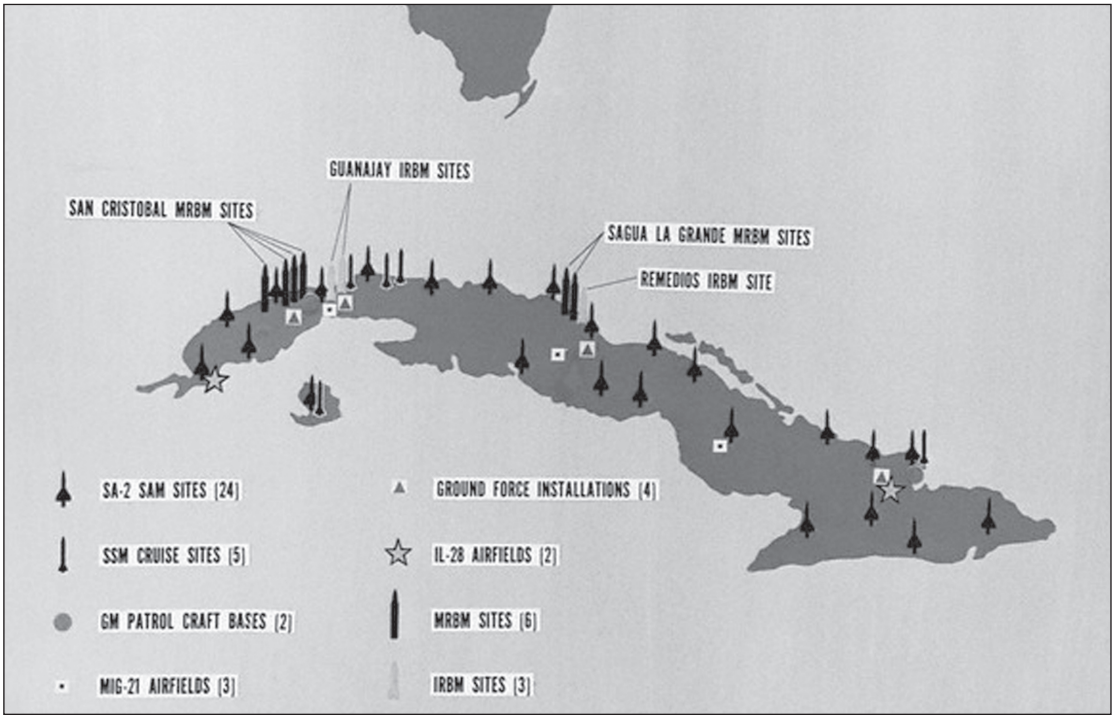
A NEW CRISIS

Missiles in our Backyard

'Now the question really is what action we take which lessens the chances of a nuclear exchange, obviously the final failure.' – President John F. Kennedy.

The JCS planned and directed the execution of all Cuban overflights. No flights took off before the JCS briefed President Kennedy and received his authorisation for each mission. The Strategic Air Command (SAC) Recon Center at Offutt AFB, Nebraska, transmitted the approved orders through the chain of command to the local command centre.

A contemporary US map of Cuba (dated 5 October 1962) showing reconnaissance objectives by type. (Albert Grandolini collection)



A contemporary US map of Cuba showing Soviet military locations. (Albert Grandolini collection)

Brigadier General John A. DesPortes commanded the 4080th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (SRW). He was a great leader and respected by officers and enlisted men alike for his professionalism. For example, he knew many of the Wing's support staff by name and never failed to acknowledge them when he visited the flight line. Personal visits by General DesPortes to the homes of 4080th SRW pilots signalled a critical situation unfolding. He took a personal interest in his troops' welfare and they returned the kindness with their respect and dedication.

At Wing level, pilots were assigned to the scheduled flights. All support functions, such as Maintenance, Photography and Operations were alerted of the forthcoming events. When the Physiological Support Unit was provided the name of the U-2 pilot scheduled to fly, technicians had his gear ready when he reported. The pilots tasked for these missions were: Majors Rudolph Anderson, Buddy Brown, and Steve Heyser, and Captains George Bull, Ed Emerling, Roger Herman, Charles Kern, Gerald McIlmoyle, James Qualls, Robert Primrose, and Daniel Schmarr.

It took a team of well-trained men and specialised equipment to support the U-2 program. Although the job duties varied greatly in the support functions, no one took their work lightly. Units directly involved with the U-2 support (food services, motor pool, finance, personnel, civil engineering, to name a few) had a TOP SECRET area on the base called Warehouse B. In addition to these units, other critical operations assisted in ensuring the U-2 became airborne without issues. These units were Automatic Pilot, Egress, Field Maintenance, Hydraulics, Instruments, Organizational Maintenance, Photography, Pneumatics, Radio, Radar, Sheet Metal, and the Weather unit.

The camera maintenance personnel had special pride in their work, and they trained well for these missions. A favourite quote of the unit was that 'If the camera doesn't work, it was only a training flight.' When the aircraft returned at the end of the flight, photography specialists quickly offloaded the film and delivered it to a waiting aircraft bound for the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC) in Washington, DC where it would be processed immediately and presented to the President.

14 October 1962, USAF Captain Steve Heyser Flies his U-2 over Cuba

The US Air Force began preparations for the Cuba Project early in October by having four pilots checked out in the CIA U-2C model. It was inconclusive at that moment if the Agency would fly the Cuba missions or if the Air Force would be assigned to fly. Four pilots, Rudy Anderson, Steve Heyser, Buddy Brown, and Jerry McIlmoyle, flew to Edwards AFB, California, where the C model aircraft were based. Anderson and Heyser had already been qualified to fly the C model, therefore, Brown and McIlmoyle were returned to their assigned base in south Texas. SAC and Agency leaders finalised the plan for the Air Force to fly the Cuba missions.

In the early morning hours of 14 October, the day dawned with heavy cloud cover over the island. Steve Heyser prepared for his scheduled flight that would take him over western Cuba. As part of the pre-flight activities, Heyser received his mission briefing, dressed in his pressure suit and began his pre-breathing period.[1] He had launched from Edwards AFB shortly after midnight local time. The flight plan directed him to fly across the southwestern part of the US, out over the Gulf of Mexico. By 0735 he turned north over western Cuba. In addition to monitoring his camera, he maintained a straight and level path while also watching for wisps of smoke with spiralling contrails, a sign of a missile being launched. He flew his aircraft as briefed, snapping nearly 1,000 photographs of the western half of the island and returned to McCoy AFB, Florida, at approximately 0930. At the completion of his mission, the film was unloaded from the cameras on his aircraft and quickly flown by T-39 to Washington, DC. While the film was being removed from the cameras, he debriefed details of his flight to the SAC Director of Operations and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence. These clips provided evidence of Soviet R-12 (SS-4 Sandal) medium range missile sites under construction and R-14 Chusovaya (SS-5 Skean) intermediate range missiles and launchers.

The NPIC photo interpreters analysed the film and compared it to previous photographs using 3D glasses. By calculating the angle of the sun, they determined the height and length of objects on the ground. Within 24 hours the photo interpreters determined the area of San Cristobal in Pinar del Rio Province to be a launch platform for surface-to-surface MRBMs. By the next day, they identified trailers, launch equipment and transport trucks. An MRBM in the area matched microfilm of a SS-4 which was provided by Soviet spy, Oleg Penkovsky.

Possible Soviet nuclear warhead bunker under construction at San Cristobal, Cuba. This photograph highlights the use of pre-fabricated construction materials and helps to demonstrate how it was possible for the Soviets to erect the missile infrastructure so quickly. (Albert Grandolini collection)

15 October 1962, Holy Loch, Scotland

Six US Navy Polaris-armed submarines from Holy Loch departed for their designated wartime stations. The submarine *USS Abraham Lincoln* (SSBN-602) cut short a scheduled maintenance period to deploy to the Atlantic.

Soviets on the Move

15 October 1962, Captain Nikolai Shumkov, B-130, near the Azores Islands

Naval Command Moscow finally made contact with the submarines and changed the original orders. B-130 was instructed to hold its position in the Sargasso Sea.[2]

Captain Shumkov ordered B-130 to periscope depth. There had been no communication for the captain since the submarine departed Sayda Bay. Brigade Commander Agafonov had ordered daily radio checks by a coded click of the transmission key. The purpose of the signal was to ensure only two of the submarines surfaced at the same time.

Lieutenant Voronov arrived to assume control of the watch from Executive Officer Frolov. The outgoing Frolov briefed Voronov and then passed the duty officer armband to the current officer. Shumkov stood near Voronov in the radio room awaiting new reports. Traditionally, in the Soviet system information held by a few upper-level officers was only released at the last possible minute. Voronov waited expectantly for anything to come off the teletype machine. Finally, the message rattled through the old machine. After the encryption process, a message printed in Cyrillic rolled out. Shumkov read the message quickly and took a copy to the navigator's planning area. Shumkov shouted, 'Bring out charts showing the southern area of the Bahamas and the Sargasso Sea.' His impatience showed for everyone present.

Those gathered with Shumkov and Voronov stared at the chart which showed the Bahamas from the east coast of Florida, including Grand Bahama, New Providence and Eleuthera. The Bahama Islands chain continued to the Turks Islands and Hispaniola, consisting of Haiti and Dominican Republic. They all knew many US anti-submarine aircraft were based on Naval Air Stations at Jacksonville, Mayport and Key West, Florida.

Shumkov passed the message to Frolov to read aloud to everyone present: 'The Sixty-Ninth Brigade of Submarines will modify track from ...' Here it summarised the original orders. Frolov continued, 'The brigade will deploy due north of the entrance to the Turks Island Passage and take up combat positions in the Sargasso Sea.'

Frolov looked to Shumkov with a puzzled expression. The previous orders directed them to Mariel, Cuba. Why were they now ordered to combat patrol? Shumkov asked Communicator Cheprokov to meet in the captain's cabin. Once inside, Shumkov asked Cheprokov what the monitors had learned from English-language broadcasts.

'Nothing at all,' he replied, 'because we haven't been at shallow depth to raise the HF antenna.' The captain told Cheprokov to ask his men to scan American commercial broadcast frequencies. Shumkov gave the broadcast times for the *Voice of America* and Russian and English programs. Cheprokov reluctantly agreed but did not question the political officer's position. Shumkov had considered this as well, 'I will invite him to listen in with us and tell him it is required to know what is going on.'

Cheprokov returned to the communications room and listened on his headset to the broadcast from *Voice of America*. The announcer reported, 'Today, the sixteenth of October 1962, the New York Yankees won the fifty-ninth World Series by defeating the San Francisco Giants, four games to three.'

ExComm Organises to Assist the President

16 October 1962, Tuesday, 0845, The White House, Washington, DC

> 'How do you know this is a medium-range ballistic missile?' – President John F. Kennedy

Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett served under President Harry Truman. He declared to anyone who would listen: 'It is shocking that our intelligence services are so deficient it was possible to have large weapons installed so close to the US.'

The Director of NPIC Arthur Lundahl and Deputy Director of the CIA Ray Cline passed the photographs taken over Cuba to the National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy. He then alerted President Kennedy of photos taken two days earlier from a U-2 reconnaissance aircraft. A major international crisis was brewing in the Caribbean. NPIC determined conclusively from the film that missiles and nuclear weapons were on-site in Cuba. The President called his brother and closest confidant, Robert, the Attorney General. At a meeting in the Oval Office, the President told his brother of the U-2's recent flight over Cuba and the photographic evidence it captured.

President Kennedy and his advisers had learned of the accelerated activity in the previous summer months, the Soviets moving into Cuba with a gamut of weapons, jet bombers, anti-aircraft missiles, and MiG fighter aircraft. Most were in disbelief that the Soviets would deliberately deploy nuclear-capable surface-to-surface missiles. They recalled meetings with Soviet representatives in September and early October when the US had received assurances that 'offensive' missiles were not being installed in Cuba.[3]

By 1145, Second Deputy Director of the CIA General Marshall Carter presented a formal briefing to a group of senior officers in the Cabinet Room adjoining the Oval Office. Armed with charts, photographs and maps to identify an area near San Cristobal in western Cuba, Carter identified 14 canvas-covered missile trailers photographed on 14 October. Smaller rectangular shapes were identified as the launchers. The President asked how far construction had progressed; Lundahl reported it was difficult to tell based on what they had seen so far. His analysts had not seen this type of installation, not even in the Soviet Union. Missile expert Sydney Graybeal showed the President photos of the last May Day parade in the USSR which depicted missiles on display. For the officials in the briefing room that day, it was difficult to identify the point in the photograph as a missile base in the making. An updated picture a few days later clearly identified more construction undertaken. No one in the meeting expected to learn about Russia putting surface-to-surface missiles in Cuba barely 90 miles from the coast of Florida.

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara asked Graybeal if there were also nuclear warheads in Cuba. Graybeal reported there were none identified by his analysts; however, they could be mounted in only a few hours. General Maxwell Taylor spoke up to share his knowledge that the sites could be operational quite rapidly. Graybeal said that so far only one missile had been seen close to a launcher-erector. McNamara had educated himself on the risks of military confrontation with the Soviets and explained to the group his belief there must be storage sites nearby. Everyone concluded the President should authorise additional U-2 flights to identify missile bases, warheads and storage sites.

Immediately after seeing the photographic evidence, the President made three critically important decisions:

1. Only a limited number of senior officials would be informed of the missile deployment in Cuba.
2. The Executive Committee (ExComm) would be required to restrict information shared to their associates to ensure neither the press, Congress nor the general public would learn of the situation until the President was prepared to respond.
3. ExComm was directed to assemble immediately alternative responses to the Soviet threat and debate the pros and cons of each.

The President had formalised ExComm under National Security Council Action Memorandum #196 for the purpose of directing operations of the Executive Branch in the current crisis. President Kennedy would serve as the official chairman of the National Security Council, informally known as ExComm. They assembled for the first official meeting mid-morning on 16 October 1962. ExComm, consisting of the following officials, met daily at 1000 and reviewed incoming information:

President John F. Kennedy
Vice President, Lyndon Johnson
Ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Maxwell Taylor
Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara
Secretary of State, Dean Rusk
Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America, Edward Martin
Under Secretary of State, George Ball
Deputy Under Secretary of State, Alexis Johnson
Secretary of the Treasury, Douglas Dillon
Deputy Director US Information Agency, Don Wilson
Director of CIA, John McCone
Presidential Adviser on National Security, McGeorge Bundy
Presidential Counsel, Ted Sorensen

Although these were the core members of ExComm, periodically other experts would be invited. During the meeting with the department leaders, everyone realised the Soviets had been placing missiles in Cuba and lying to the US despite Khrushchev's attempt to reassure the President to the contrary. Missiles had been shipped to Cuba and construction on the sites there had begun some months previous. A large naval shipyard and submarine base were under careful observation by intelligence agents in Cuba. Some congressmen who learned of the Soviet missiles suggested the US take military action against the island immediately.

The question foremost in the minds of the leaders was how to have the weapons removed. Secretary of State Dean Rusk stated what most considered, 'I don't think we can sit still now.' The consensus expressed by most of those present was that the Soviet missiles could not be allowed to remain in Cuba. The presence of the missiles appeared to represent a political challenge. The President had made public statements on 4 and 13 September which emphasised the US position that Soviet missiles in Cuba would not be tolerated. A critical issue remained that if the Soviet threat of missiles in Cuba was left unchallenged, Berlin and other parts of the world would also be at risk. However, members of Kennedy's own intelligence community told him on four occasions the Russians would not place offensive weapons in Cuba. As recently as 19 September, intelligence officials 'concluded the Soviet Union would not make Cuba a strategic base.'

During that first meeting of ExComm, in the heat of the discussions, the President expressed his opinion, 'We're going to take out these missiles. We should be making preparations.' Over the coming days, it became apparent the team had several options. General Taylor expressed the choices: The US could take them out through military strike, squeeze them out through coercive pressure or buy them out through a negotiated settlement. UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson recommended diplomatic negotiation first, but his plan received no support among the generals who saw the military action as the only solution. Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson was invited to attend some ExComm meetings to provide his insight on the issue. General Taylor and Acheson voiced their opinions for a military airstrike and made a presentation to the committee which favoured an air attack and ground invasion. George Ball offered the best argument against the strike. 'We cannot launch a surprise attack against Cuba without destroying our moral position and alienating friends and allies. A sneak attack would be reminiscent of Pearl Harbor, and we all know how that went.'

Kennedy knew if he announced the presence of missiles in Cuba, the generals on his staff would miss a chance for a surprise attack. Surely, Khrushchev knew the US would eventually learn the location of the weapons. Bundy reminded the President, 'Khrushchev had been extremely explicit in the TASS statement about the danger of such deployments.' McNamara cautioned, 'The minimum risk from early warning would be dropping conventional bombs on the US East Coast.' Dillon shook the members out of their lethargy by voicing this opinion. 'What if the missiles carried nuclear weapons?' The President was startled by the question, 'I don't see Khrushchev doing that, but not many of us thought he would put missiles in Cuba. And, yet there they are.' Many of those present that day echoed the same thoughts. 'An attack in Cuba might allow Khrushchev to put pressure on the Allies in Berlin,' a constant thought in Kennedy's mind.

Dean Rusk expressed his thoughts: 'This is an overwhelmingly serious problem. I had not thought the Soviets would go this far. I believe we should think very hard about whether to remove the bases with surprise air strikes or eliminate the Cuban problem by moving into the island.'

As talks continued, several of the group, Robert McNamara, Robert Kennedy, George Ball, Theodore Sorensen and former Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett, strongly favoured coercive pressure in the form of a blockade. The idea of a quarantine or blockade began a serious discussion. It was limited pressure and still left the US in control of events. The group argued for the removal of the missiles in Cuba in exchange for lifting the blockade. Almost certainly the Soviet Union would demand removal of US missiles near their border in Turkey. Some American politicians did not agree with the original placement of missiles in Turkey and Italy which they understood could be considered a provocation. Indeed, the location of Jupiter missiles near the Russian border was considered an act to destabilise the nuclear balance.

Rusk expressed a sobering thought: 'Recognizing General Taylor's admission that not all sites could be destroyed immediately, and if the Russians launch those missiles, we are in a general nuclear war.'

Early into the first meeting, members of ExComm realised they were confronting the possibility of millions of Americans being killed by a nuclear attack.

During one contentious meeting of this group, the President passed a note to Robert Kennedy: 'I now know how Tojo felt when he was planning Pearl Harbor.'[4]

The President did not attend all ExComm meetings. He was aware that personalities changed when he was in the room. Some even made recommendations based on what they believed he wanted to hear. Robert Kennedy argued that America's traditions and history did not favour such a drastic course of action. He expressed the importance of preserving the American ideals.

17 October 1962, Wednesday, 0830, ExComm Meets at the Department of State, Washington, DC

The ExComm members met at the Department of State to avoid attracting the attention of reporters and the press. George Ball presented Adlai Stevenson's argument against a military invasion. Bombing or invading Cuba would put NATO allies into a bad situation. Britain and France would possibly even develop their own Berlin policy, omitting the US.

US Ambassador to Moscow, Llewellyn Thompson believed the presence of missiles in Cuba to be part of Khrushchev's new plan for Berlin. Thompson argued, 'I believe he's building up now and probing to see whether or not he could do it.'

Vice Admiral Herbert D. Riley, a member of the JCS, reported his discussion with McNamara the previous evening. All the discussion had centred on the strikes against the Soviet missiles. Riley reported the JCS wanted to go on record as opposing strikes alone. There was concern that if the situation went wrong, they would be blamed for the results.

General Taylor arrived from the ExComm meeting at 1130 where the recent development indicated a Kennedy-Khrushchev summit meeting. There had been little support for a meeting at this point. Discussion now centred on a blockade, but most believed there had to be more. The Chiefs agreed: 'If we want to declare a blockade, we must declare war.'

17 October 1962, Wednesday, 1000, ExComm, The White House, Washington, DC

> 'I don't know quite what kind of a world we will live in after we've struck Cuba and we've started it.' – Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara

Secretary McNamara, one voice of reason, argued for a quarantine or blockade of the island. The JCS generals continued to argue strongly for an all-out attack as the only action; they believed an air strike would have to include all Cuba's military installations and ultimately a ground invasion of sorts to follow. Air Force Chief of Staff Curtis LeMay also argued strongly for a military attack on Cuba. President Kennedy asked for opinions on the Russian response to such action. LeMay confidently assured him there would be none. However, Kennedy was sceptical and did not agree. If Russia did not respond in Cuba, they would surely look toward Berlin. The President stated thoughtfully, 'Our struggle against communism throughout the world is far more than physical survival; it has at its essence our heritage and our ideals.' Secretary McNamara advised the President that necessary air strike preparations could be ready on 23 October if that became his decision. The President could not accept that the US would pound Cuba with bombs, killing thousands of innocent civilians in a surprise attack.

Robert Kennedy supported McNamara's position. Like his brother, he did not accept a plan for the US to drop bombs on Cuba that would kill thousands of civilians who likely had no idea what was happening or why. He argued America's tradition and history would not permit such a course of action. ExComm spent more time on the moral side of the situation than any other single issue. It was a troubling matter that caused an examination of conscience for all.

17 October 1962, Wednesday, 1600, ExComm Meets at the Department of State, Washington, DC

When ExComm reassembled at 1600, Dean Acheson, former Secretary of State had been invited by the President. Acheson had significant experience with foreign policy and had been the architect of several Cold War policies: the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, NATO, United States Objectives and Programs for National Security (NSC 68), and the Korean War to name a few. There were various supporters and opponents for the discussions: Were the Soviets' missiles a serious threat? Did they affect the nuclear balance? Should diplomatic warnings be issued before a strike on the missiles? How would the Soviets respond? Though they could not agree on an action plan, they did agree simply that the missiles had to go.

17 October 1962, Wednesday, 1930, Robert Kennedy and Theodore Sorenson, Andrews AFB, Prince Georges County, Maryland

The Attorney General and the President's Counsel, met with President Kennedy upon his return at Andrews AFB from an afternoon of campaigning in Connecticut. Sorenson prepared a summary of recent ExComm discussions.

Robert Kennedy met with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin and explained the President's concern. The ambassador said he was instructed by Chairman Nikita Khrushchev to reassure the President there would be no plan to place surface-to-surface missiles or offensive weapons in Cuba. The Chairman said he liked the US President and did not want to disrupt the relationship. Robert Kennedy cautioned Dobrynin that there would be grave consequences if missiles were deployed to Cuba. The ambassador again assured the President's brother there would *never* be Soviet missiles in Cuba.

ExComm examined photos taken by reconnaissance aircraft that clearly showed at least 16 and maybe as many as 32 missiles capable of a 1,000-mile (1,609.34 kilometres) range. The photography indicated missiles were being aimed toward US cities, and within only minutes of being launched, 80 million people would be dead. The President considered that a huge responsibility. Commandant of the Marine Corps, General David M. Shoup, expressed what many at the meeting thought: 'You are in a pretty bad fix, Mr. President.' The President answered quickly, 'You are in it with me.'

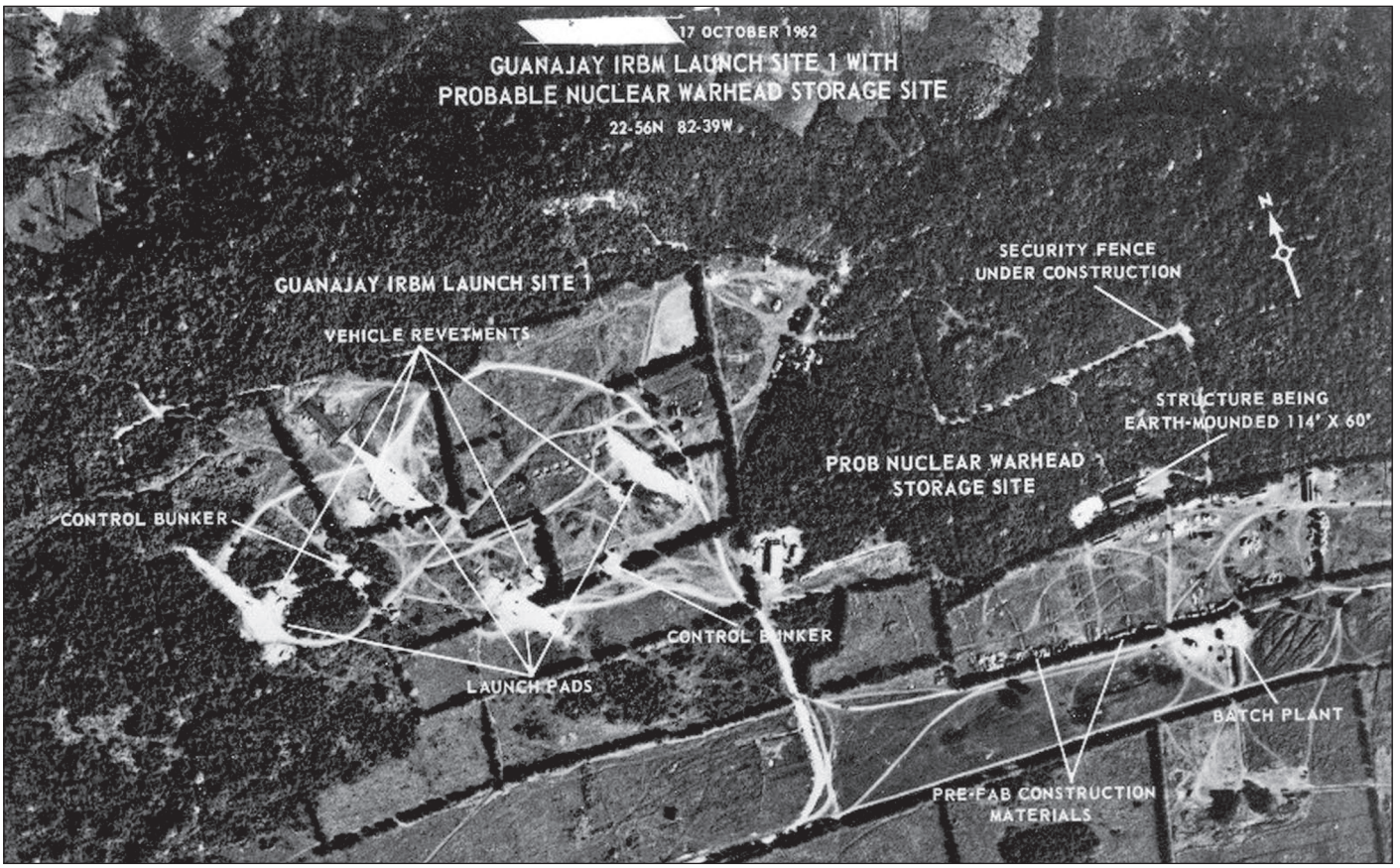
Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko had a previously scheduled appointment with the President. Since a final plan of action had not been settled, Kennedy decided to keep the appointment. At the meeting Gromyko demanded that the US stop threatening Cuba. He said Cuba only wanted peaceful coexistence. The ambassador explained Khrushchev wanted the President to understand they furnished only agriculture and land development equipment for the Cuban people to support themselves. Khrushchev also wanted Kennedy to know the Soviet Union would *never* become involved in a plan to furnish offensive weapons to Cuba.

Dealing with Deception

18 October 1962, Thursday, ExComm Meeting, The White House and Department of State

> 'Now the question really is what action we take which lessens the chances of a nuclear exchange, which obviously is the final failure.' – President John F. Kennedy

ExComm members met alternately at the State Department and The White House. To avoid raising suspicion of the press seeing this entire large group together in a line of limousines, many travelled crowded together in one vehicle. After hours of debate, weighing pros and cons for courses of action, the group developed an outline that set



This reconnaissance photograph of Soviet IRBM launch site #1 at Guanajay, taken on 17 October 1962, shows a probable nuclear warhead storage site. (Albert Grandolini collection)

A contemporary map showing the estimated ranges in nautical miles (2,000 yards) of various Soviet nuclear weapons that might be based in Cuba. (Albert Grandolini collection)

forth contingencies and recommendations for each. The members had no designated leader and this allowed unrestricted dialog, an unusual situation for the Executive Branch where rank and title otherwise would be strictly observed. Robert Kennedy realised this open style of meeting was tremendously advantageous; it did not occur often within the Executive Branch. While ExComm worked diligently, the President maintained somewhat of a typical workday.

The majority opinion of ExComm now voted for the blockade. However, when the committee met with the President, some positions changed. The President sent the ExComm group back to continue discussions. The magnitude of their task hung heavy in the room. All recognised there was no easy decision, but time was running out. ExComm members spoke now as equals, discussions completely uninhibited and unrestricted.

The next morning the President summoned the Commander in Chief of Tactical Air Command (TAC) General Walter Sweeney. A lingering concern of the President was the likelihood of success in destroying all missile sites and nuclear weapons in Cuba. General Sweeney advised the President:

> We have the finest air force in the world. If we can't do the job, nobody can. But can I say there is no chance that one or two missiles and nuclear warheads might still be operational and can still be fired after the attack? No, Mr. President, I can't say that. Even a surprise attack could not guarantee all missiles and weapons would be destroyed.

Robert Kennedy met that evening with Anatoly Dobrynin at 2130 in the Soviet Embassy. Kennedy reminded the ambassador in September he told the Attorney General that Soviets had not placed missiles in Cuba and had no plans to do so. However, Robert Kennedy said the President had been deceived and the current situation risked peace in the world.

19 October 1962, USS Blandy, Sailing to the Caribbean

Crew members listened to the radio as they ate their evening meal in the wardroom: 'On 19 October, the Navy deployed photoreconnaissance F8U-1P Crusader jets to Key West.' The announcer further reported that the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* (CV-6) had sailed from Norfolk. Allegedly the carrier departed to avoid Hurricane Ella; however, no other ships left Norfolk at that time. USAF Air Defense Command ordered multiple squadrons of F-104 Starfighters to Key West.

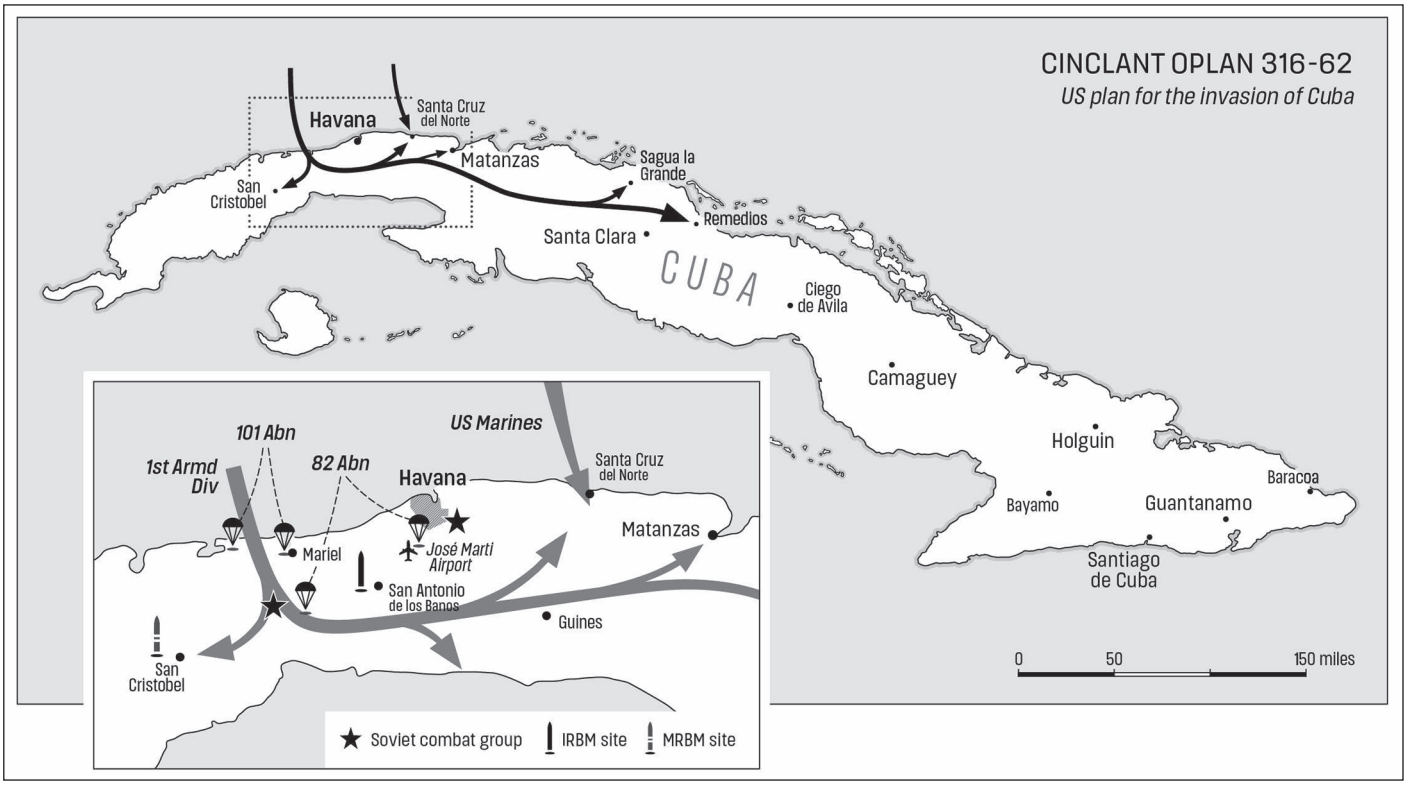
19 – 20 October 1962, Friday and Saturday, ExComm Meeting, The White House

> 'These brass hats have one great advantage in their favor. If we listen to them and do what they want us to do, none of us will be alive later to tell them that they were wrong.' – President John F. Kennedy

ExComm met for additional discussions; the group concluded it was now up to one man, the President. At the same time, US military units were ordered on alert. Four tactical air squadrons had been placed on readiness alert in the event the President decided to move with the recommendation of air strikes. In the late afternoon, Kennedy decided in favour of the blockade.

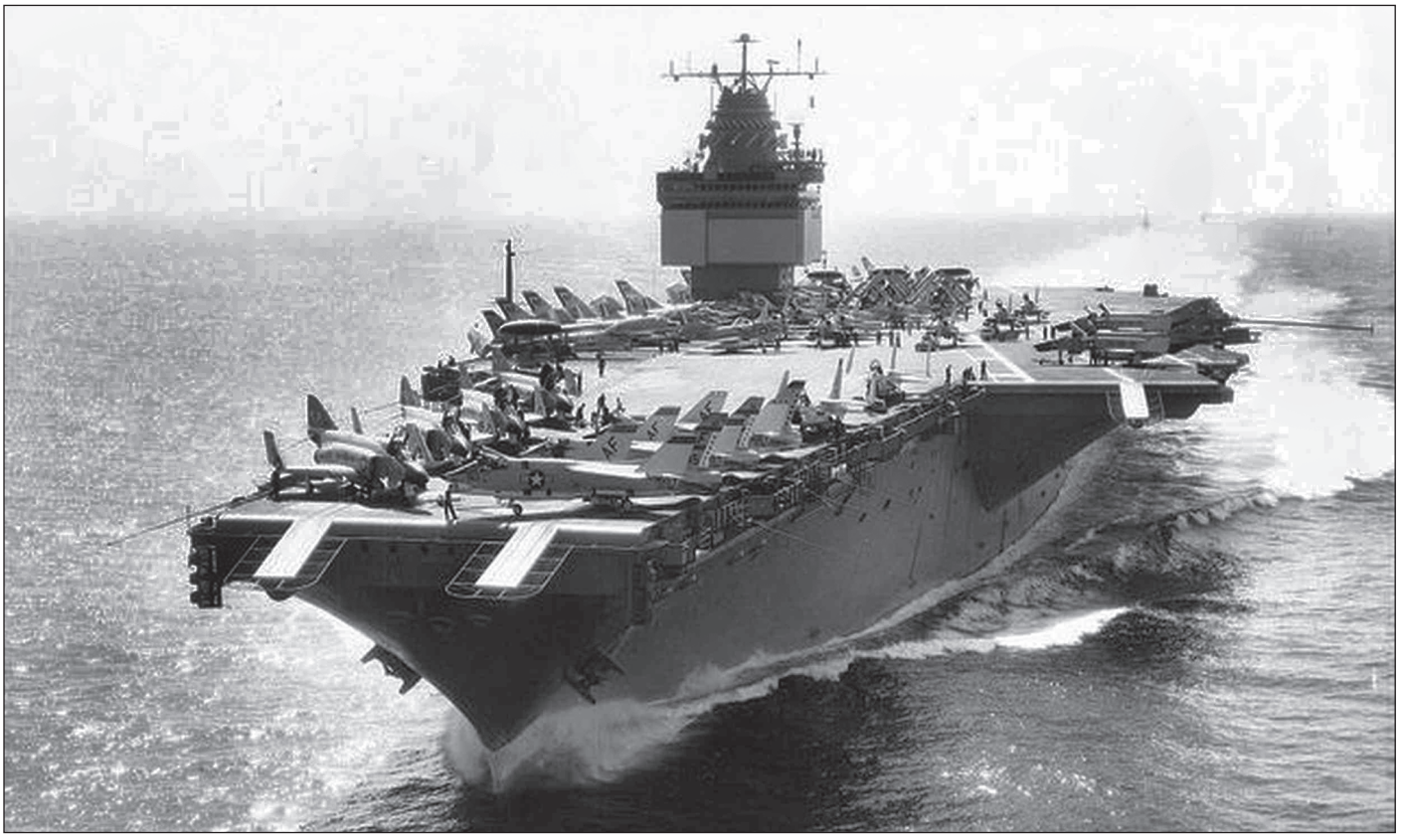
20 – 22 October 1962, Headquarters Atlantic Fleet, Norfolk, Virginia

Aircraft carriers USS *Enterprise* and USS *Independence* became part of US Navy Task Force 135 with Air Wings 11 and 32 deployed to Puerto Rico. Marine Corps A-4D Skyhawk Squadron 225 flew to Florida.



Map showing proposed invasion plans of Cuba. (Map by Micky Hewitt, based on graphic from Brugioni, *The Invasion of Cuba*)

USAF aircraft dispersed across the ramp as directed by JFK. (Albert Grandolini collection)



USS *Enterprise* (CVAN-65), the first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and the fastest warship in the world. Visible on the foredeck are F4H-1/F-4B Phantom II interceptors of fighter squadron VF-102, and F8U-1P/RF-8A Crusader reconnaissance jets of VFP-62. (Albert Grandolini collection)

Soviet Submarines Sail

20 October 1962, Commander Ryurik Ketov, B-4, Norwegian Sea

Captain Ketov commanded B-4, his second submarine commissioned in 1961. The four submarines of Captain Agafonov's brigade received orders to change direction from Mariel to the Sargasso Sea, a region of the southern part of the Atlantic Ocean. Huge areas of the Sargasso Sea contained brown seaweed and clear blue water.

Dubivko's B-36 sat due west of Ketov's B-4. Both vessels experienced extremely high waves. The submarines had to remain submerged in daylight hours and surface to recharge batteries at night.

South of Iceland, they picked up the communications of US P-2 Neptune patrol aircraft. Ketov thought the surveillance aircraft patrolled along the brigade's course. There was no way to be sure, but he thought acoustic buoys had been planted in the Northern Atlantic.

To make matters worse, the inside temperature of B-4 rose to 37 degrees centigrade (98 degrees Fahrenheit) as the temperature of the sea increased. With the high sea temperatures, it became difficult to distil fresh water. The crew of 78 experienced severe personal hygiene issues with only three toilets and two showers onboard. When the submarine surfaced to recharge batteries, the captain allowed crew members to dive into the sea for a quick bath and to relieve themselves.

Ketov knew he should go to the surface to monitor broadcasts and wait for messages from Moscow. However, he recognised that the submarine could be spotted, and he had to comply with Moscow's orders. Broadcast times were 0500 and 1700 local time.

B-4 sailed on southward and had been able to recover some time lost during the storm in the Atlantic. Ketov was happy his submarine had remained undetected.

USAF Flies Intelligence Missions

21 October l962, USAF Prepares for Low-Level Flights over Cuba

While SAC flew high altitude U-2 recon missions, Tactical Air Command's 363d Tactical Reconnaissance Wing at Shaw AFB, South Carolina, received orders to prepare for low-level flights over Cuba. The 363d Wing deployed to MacDill AFB, Florida. On 26 October the Wing launched the first flight of low-level aircraft, the RF-101 Voodoo and RB-66 Destroyer. For the next three weeks through photographic and visual reconnaissance, the flights gathered intel verification of the Cuban buildup and the presence of Soviet Ilyushin Il-28 tactical jet bombers. Film from the flights was flown directly to Washington, DC for processing and delivered to the President.

On 21 October aircraft carrier USS *Essex* quietly departed from Guantanamo Bay Naval Station, Cuba at 0330 hours. Destroyer escorts prepared to sail from Newport, Rhode Island.

22 October 1962, USS Blandy, Newport, Rhode Island

Blandy crewmen had been granted liberty in the local area of Newport. While some officers and technicians shopped at the Servmart, a hangar-size building stocked with off-the-shelf spare parts, a call came in. The cashier made an announcement over the speaker: 'All personnel from the destroyers at Piers One and Two are directed to return to your ships immediately as ordered by the duty officer of the Cruiser Destroyer Command.'

The ship was on two-hour notice to sail. Officers and crewmen watched President Kennedy's televised message to the nation at 1900. The President's words struck the Navy men like lightening.

22 October 1962, The White House, Washington, DC

The President's message:

> Good evening, my fellow citizens. This government, as promised, has maintained the closest surveillance of the Soviet military buildup on the island of Cuba. To halt this buildup, a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated. All ships of any kind bound for Cuba from whatever nation will, if found to contain cargo of offensive weapons, be turned back.

22 October 1962, Defense Attaché Office, US Embassy, Moscow

US Air Force Attaché, William F. Scott, read a recent message sent from Washington. It appeared the current situation had been blown up into a major crisis. He told the Army warrant officer who delivered the message, 'Call everyone to a meeting in half an hour.'

Scott went to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) and reported, 'We have some tough heads-up tasking from the Pentagon.'

'Do you want to go to the Conference Room or write it on the blackboard?'

Scott replied, 'We need to bring Ambassador [Llewellyn] Thompson in too since our orders will place most of my officers at considerable risk of compromise.'

Scott and the DCM walked to the Conference Room where the ambassador waited. The attaché briefed the ambassador and DCM with copies of the photographs showing Soviet missile sites in Cuba.

'In addition,' Scott said, 'Our attachés have been ordered to begin round-the-clock surveillance of all key Moscow and Leningrad military targets. All defense attaché personnel, including the non-commissioned officers, will be on the road 24-hours a day making surveillance rounds according to our national plan.'

The ambassador inquired if overt acts might cause incidents.

'Yes, we are required to obtain discreet photographs of unusual movements, such as airbases, guards and naval deployments from Leningrad and Murmansk. We also provide surveillance of the Ministry of Defense, Navy, ground forces and strategic rocket forces for increased activity.'

The ambassador reminded Scott he wanted no repeat of a previous event when two sailors were caught photographing submarines in the Neva River, near Leningrad. It had been a humiliating event when a naval attaché and assistant attaché called from the Leningrad consulate. The attachés said they had been forced to walk through crowded streets of Leningrad displaying their bare asses after being caught by Soviet surveillance men while counting submarines at the pier. The worst part of the humiliating event was the photographs published on the front page of *Izvestia* showing 'two officers running through town wearing only their shirts and camera bags over their shoulders displaying bare asses for all to see.'

As the ambassador prepared to exit the room, he turned to Scott, 'No more Hollywood car chases by your attachés either. Tell them to take the Metro or walk.'

During the 13 days from 18 to 31 October 1962, the US Defense Attaché Office personnel logged more travel miles than the previous six months. They travelled the streets and alleyways of Moscow, and the waterfronts of Leningrad, Riga, Murmansk and Archangelsk.

After Kennedy's address on 22 October, Soviet television and radio reported the intentions of the American aggressors. None of the messages on television or radio mentioned the movement of Soviet troops or missiles to Cuba. The Soviet Army continued to

practice for the 7 November parade in Red Square to commemorate the 1917 October Revolution.[5] The attachés observed the arms displayed in the rehearsal parade were the same as in 1961.

The President Announces the Crisis

22 October 1962, Monday, 1900, President John F. Kennedy, The White House, Address to the Nation

The President met with cabinet and congressional leaders and informed them of the crisis in progress. Many congressmen believed the President should take a stronger position. Some thought the blockade to be a weak response. President Kennedy explained his responsibility to protect the security of the US, and he reminded them once a missile attack began, millions of Americans would be killed. Ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson, had come from New York to attend the meeting on Saturday, 20 October. He strongly advocated, 'We make clear to the Soviet Union, if they withdraw their missiles from Cuba, the US will withdraw missiles from Turkey and Italy.'[6]

President Kennedy's scheduled address to the nation was to be broadcast live on television on Monday evening. Selected members of ExComm were designated to inform ambassadors stationed in the Washington, DC area and others scheduled meetings with the OAS to explain the legal justification for the US action.

An hour before the President's speech, Secretary Rusk requested a meeting with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin to advise him of the forthcoming message to be delivered that evening. Together with a copy of the speech, Rusk delivered a letter to Khrushchev from Kennedy. Dobrynin had been kept in the dark by his own government about the missile deployment in Cuba. Obviously, the news from Rusk shocked Dobrynin who left the secretary's office visibly emotional.

The letter with a copy of the speech, sent directly from Kennedy to Khrushchev, said in part:

> In our discussions and exchanges on Berlin and other international issues, the one thing that has most concerned me has been the possibility that your government would not correctly understand the will and determination of the United States in any given situation. I have not assumed that you or any other sane man would in this nuclear age, deliberately plunge the world into war. It is crystal clear no country could win and such action could only result in catastrophic consequences to the whole world, including to the aggressor.

The diplomatic plan was of great significance. A firm legal foundation established the US action under the OAS charter. The US position around the world was strengthened by OAS support for the quarantine. Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson convinced French President Charles de Gaulle and German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of the correctness of the action and gained their support. De Gaulle said, 'It is exactly what I would have done.' He did not even believe it necessary to see the photographs because as he said, 'As great government such as yours does not act without evidence.'

The President began his address to the nation at 1900 hours via television:

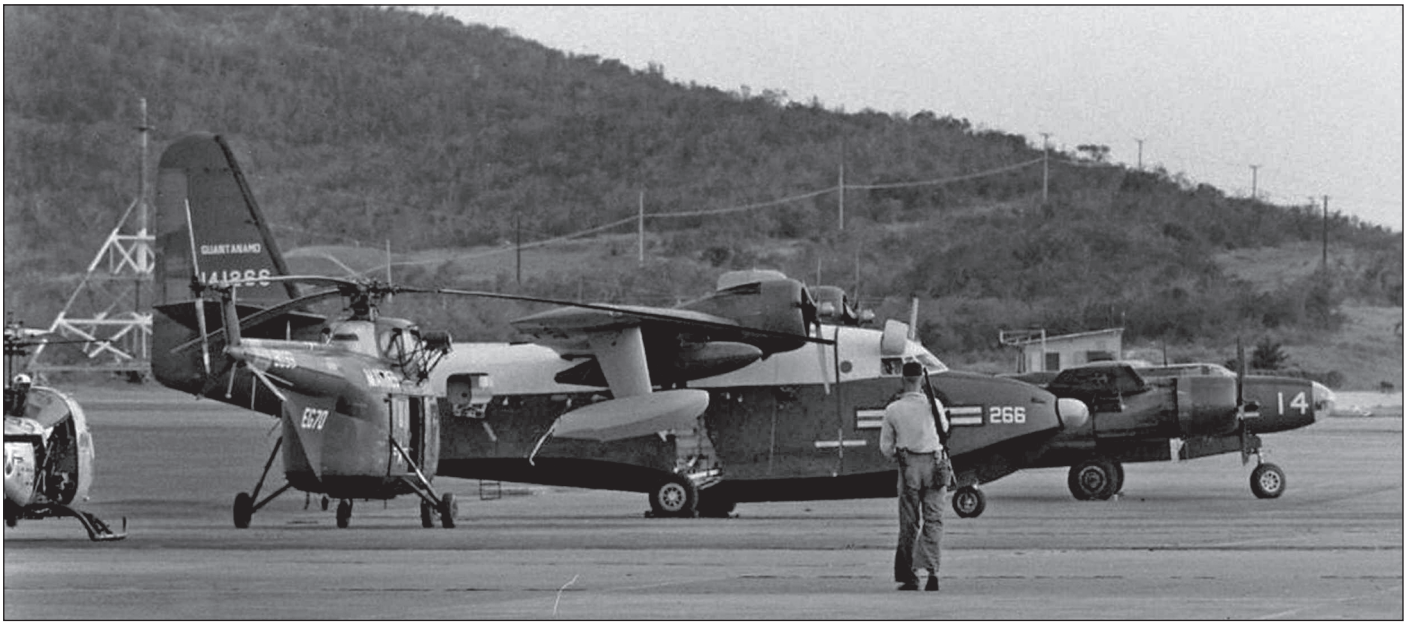
> Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites are now in preparation in Cuba. The purpose of these bases can be none other than to provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere.
>
> Upon receiving the first preliminary information last Tuesday morning, I directed our surveillance be stepped up. Having now confirmed and completed our evaluation of the evidence and our decision on a course of action, this government feels obliged to report this new crisis to you in fullest detail.
>
> Characteristics of these new missile sites indicate two distinct types of installations. Several of them include Medium Range Ballistic Missiles, capable of carrying a nuclear warhead for more than 1,000 nautical miles. Each of these missiles is capable of striking Washington, DC, the Panama Canal, Cape Canaveral, Mexico City or any other city in the southeastern part of the United States, Central America or the Caribbean.
>
> Additional sites yet completed appear to be designed for Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missiles capable of traveling more than twice as far, and thus capable of striking as far north as Hudson's Bay, Canada and as far south as Lima, Peru. Jet bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons are now being uncrated and assembled in Cuba while the necessary air bases are being prepared.
>
> The size of this undertaking makes clear that it has been planned for some months. Only last Thursday, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko told me in my office that he was instructed to make clear the Soviet assistance to Cuba was solely for the purpose of defense capabilities.
>
> Neither the United States nor the world community of nations can tolerate deliberate deception and offensive threats on the part of any nation, large or small. Nuclear weapons are so destructive and ballistic missiles so swift, that any substantially increased possibility of their use or any sudden change in their deployment may well be regarded as a derisive threat to peace.
>
> Acting, therefore, in the defense of our own security and that of the entire Western Hemisphere, and under the authority entrusted to me by the Constitution, I have directed that the following initial steps be taken immediately.
>
> 1. To halt offensive buildup, a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated.
> 2. I have directed the continued and increased close surveillance of Cuba and its military buildup.
> 3. It shall be the policy of this Nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union requiring full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.
> 4. As a necessary precaution, I have reinforced our base at Guantanamo and evacuated dependents of our military personnel there.
> 5. We have called an immediate meeting of the Organization of American States to consider this threat to hemisphere security.

6. Under the charter of the United Nations, we are requesting tonight that an emergency meeting of the Security Council be called without delay to take action against the Soviet Union threat to world peace.
7. I call upon Chairman Khrushchev to halt the threat to world peace and to stable relations between our two nations.

Our goal is not the victory of might, but the vindication of right, not peace at the expense of freedom, but both peace and freedom, here in this Hemisphere, and we hope around the world. God willing that goal will be achieved.

Secretary McNamara had listed for the President the preparations for current US military action: 250,000 troops, 2,000 air sorties, 90,000 Marines and Army airborne soldiers. Kennedy announced his decision for a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment shipped to Cuba.

Concurrently with the President's speech, military readiness moved forward rapidly. Missile crews went on Defense Condition



US aircraft stationed at NAS Guantanamo, in 1959–1961. Guantánamo Bay was leased to the United States following the Spanish-American War and a naval base established there. A USMC Sikorsky H-19 Chickasaw is closest to the camera, a Grumman UF-1 Albatross amphibian is seen in the middle ground, and a JD-1 utility aircraft furthest away. (Albert Grandolini collection)

American servicemen stationed at Guantánamo Bay prepare to defend the enclave. In the foreground is an M2A1/M101A1 105mm howitzer (the US system for designating weapons was changed during 1962), while children play near the barracks beyond the fence. (Albert Grandolini collection)

A US military staging area in Florida. Note the red crosses on many of the tents and the row of ambulances to the lower left. (Albert Grandolini collection)

American B-47 Stratojet bombers were on standby to strike missile and bomber bases in Cuba. (National Museum of the United States Air Force)

(DEFCON) 3; troops moved into Florida and the southeastern US military bases for staging ships and aircraft. US nuclear forces were placed on DEFCON 2, only one step away from all-out war, DEFCON 1. Saturday night, the 1st Armored Division of the US Army moved out of Texas to Georgia. The US naval base at Guantánamo Bay on the southern end of Cuba was strengthened. Strategic Air Command relocated aircraft to civilian airfields. Boeing B-47 Stratojets were refuelled and sent to nearby civilian airports to be on nuclear alert. The relocation of the B-47s allowed MacDill AFB, Tampa, Florida to be used as a forward operating base for fighter aircraft to be flown against Cuba, if necessary. Boeing B-52 Stratofortress bombers launched fully loaded with nuclear weapons and were to remain airborne. The Navy deployed 180 ships to the Caribbean. The Commander in Chief of SAC, General Thomas Powell, chose to use non-encrypted messages throughout his force so that Soviet intelligence would not mistake the seriousness of US military preparations for nuclear war.

At the end of the evening, Robert Kennedy felt immense pride in the strength and courage of his brother, the President. Whatever the outcome, Robert believed the President would be supported by the country. The Attorney General stated:

> We went to bed that night filled with concern and trepidation, but also with a sense of pride in strength, purpose and courage of the President of the United States. No one could predict what was in store in the days ahead, but we all felt that the President, because of his own wisdom and personal dignity, would have the support of a unified country.

4

THE QUARANTINE

Preparations

22 October 1962, US Navy, Norfolk, Virginia

US Navy destroyers USS *Charles P. Cecil (*DDR-835) and USS *Cony* (DDE-508), sailed from Norfolk with a large contingent of destroyers. *Cecil* joined the USS *Enterprise* and *Cony* joined the USS *Randolph* to establish a ring blockade force.

22 October 1962, Commander Charles Rozier, USS Charles P. Cecil (DDR-835)

The ship sometimes referred to as only *Cecil* or even *Old Charlie P.* established Norfolk as home port. The *Cecil* operated as a radar picket ship in Destroyer Squadron 26, Cruiser Destroyer Flotilla 8. Pickets were primarily radar guard ships prepared to act to protect its carrier from surprise attack. Plotting and tracking air contacts was the primary goal of the *Cecil*, and submarine hunting secondary.

The navigator's job had been almost a two-person job; one officer performed while supervised by the commanding officer. Captain Rozier was known throughout the squadron for the precise manoeuvring of his boat. When the ship's electronics technicians could not repair the Identification Friend or Foe (IFF), Captain Rozier went below and repaired the equipment himself.

On Saturday, 20 October, while having lunch with his family at a local Norfolk restaurant, Rozier was surprised when a Shore Patrol vehicle stopped at the front door. The Shore Patrol Petty Officer located Rozier and reported his orders were to locate all destroyer personnel. The message further told all sailors to return to their ships and be ready to sail by 1600 that afternoon.

Once underway, Rozier received a classified operations order that assigned the *Cecil* a role in air defence of the forces allocated for a US invasion of Cuba. As *Cecil* was a radar picket destroyer, it would be sent north of Cuba to support US aircraft. On 22 October the *Cecil* headed south of Haiti with sister destroyer USS *Adams* and communications ship USS *Wrangell* to await further orders. *Cecil* was ordered to a screening station for the USS *Enterprise.*

Navy aircrew briefing before a flight. Pilots from VA-66 and VA-76 flew Skyhawks from USS *Enterprise* during the crisis. (Albert Grandolini collection)

Soviets Scouting US Ports

22 October 1962, Soviet Embassy, Washington, DC

At the time President Kennedy announced to the nation the naval blockade of Cuba, Captain Agafonov's submarine force patrolled in the Sargasso Sea near the Bahamas. At the Soviet Embassy in Washington, DC, Assistant Naval Attaché, Captain Third Rank Lev Vitorygin, met with Vice Admiral Leonid Bekremyev in a room that displayed the customary large picture of Lenin.

The admiral spread out the large map and said, 'Take Polikarpov in the Land Rover and drive south on I-95 to Moorehead City, North Carolina. Check the area for traffic, loading activities on trains and highways.' Vtorygin, like others in Moscow, looked forward to assignments in Western countries away from security staff's prying eyes. He had been a shipmate of Nikolai Artamonov, who had defected in 1959 to the US. Bekremyev directed the route south on the East Coast to Norfolk Naval Base, Charleston Naval Base, Naval Air Station Jacksonville and Key West.

'What about Newport and Quonset Point, Rhode Island?' the younger officer asked.

'That area is closed to us now in retaliation for us closing Leningrad to American attachés in Moscow,' the admiral responded. 'I want you to get on the road immediately, but don't attract attention. Your vehicle is ready and cash for expenses waiting at the fiscal office.'

'Thank you, sir.'

'And Lev, no extracurricular adventures, understand?'

'Yes, sir.'

The admiral referred to Vtorygin's dalliance with a waitress in a Holiday Inn on his last road surveillance. This time with Naval Assistant Boris Polikarpov, he would be unlikely to have time for extra activities. Boris had his own liaison while stationed in Canada. He had been caught 'in the act' in a Toronto motel with a Ministry of Defence secretary who passed classified material to him. Following that event, Polikarpov was expelled from Canada.

22 October 1962, Soviet Naval Attachés, I-95 South of Washington, DC

The attachés drove their customised Land Rover with enlarged full tank of fuel and reinforced suspension. They did not try to purposefully evade FBI or Naval Intelligence. They understood the Americans simply had their jobs to do. The Soviet attachés wanted to convey the impression of an innocent trip out of the embassy. However, when they engaged in covert operations, the attachés paid more attention to their surroundings than surveillance. While Lev and Polikarpov felt more relaxed away from the office, they remained alert to observe US military forces on the move and if the 82nd Airborne and 101st Airborne Divisions appeared to be on alert. As they waited at a railroad crossing outside Quantico, olive-coloured vehicles, tanks, trucks and artillery passed by on flatbed rail cars.

When the end of the train passed and they continued on the road, a Virginia State Trooper stopped them. The officer asked for their licenses and looked at the vehicle's license plates. The trooper realised they were diplomats, apologised and waved them on their way. Once again on the road, a black Ford followed them for the remainder of the day. The attachés continued south and exited the highway at Yorktown where they checked into a local motel.

The next morning the Soviet officers drove to Newport News, home of Newport News Shipbuilding, and located at the end of the Virginia Peninsula on the northern shore of the James River. The FBI surveillance vehicle now was a blue Chevy station wagon. From their vehicle, the Soviet officers observed Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock. Out of plain sight they saw an aircraft carrier under construction. The attachés remarked how open the Americans appeared about their military services.

Back on the highway they had a clear unobstructed view of Norfolk Naval Base and two aircraft carriers docked at the pier. After they stopped for lunch in Virginia Beach, they drove by the Naval Amphibious Base at Little Creek. There appeared to be a lot of activity in the area and with aircraft on the ramp at the air station.

One evening after driving around the area, the Soviets became disoriented and could not find the right streets to the main road. They wanted to find a restaurant and their motel. After driving in circles for almost an hour, the surveillance car pulled around and stopped beside the Land Rover. The FBI agent rolled down the window and said, 'Just follow us.' Polikarpov drove behind the FBI vehicle as they led him back to the motel and disappeared.

Another team of attachés boarded a northbound train from Union Station in Washington, DC en route to Boston. From the train, they observed the submarine base at New London. To avoid requesting US permission to travel in the area, they exited the train at Boston and boarded a day train to New London. There they exited at Providence, Rhode Island, rented a car and drove to Quonset Point where three Hunter-Killer ASW groups were based. From Newport they observed the Atlantic Fleet Cruiser Destroyers docked at the pier. Once the northern team of attachés finished observations, they rented a car and drove back to Washington, DC.

A team of diplomats in Washington then drove to the Pampano Industrial Center to observe lights on in the ninth and tenth floors of the building. The US Navy Human Intelligence occupied the space for the secret Task Force 157. The staff there was responsible for spy operations around the world. Continuing on the team passed the Pentagon, all lights blazing and the parking lots almost full at 0100.

22 October 1962, Captain Aleksei Dubviko, B-36, North Atlantic

The Moscow Navy Staff directed Dubviko to sail B-36 through the Caicos Passage.[1] There had been no further explanation for the change in orders. The experienced captain determined to make the transit with a large tanker above as cover. He navigated B-36 under the tanker's wake, a risky manoeuvre. B-36 could have slammed into the tanker's propellers. Dubviko ordered his crew to place the submarine northeast of the Caicos Passage and waited at a depth of 10 metres.

As they waited, the radio crew monitored US messages, but they learned little new information other than the Americans were on the move. Captain Dubviko considered the situation now and thought of the change of orders they received. What did it really mean? Had war been declared or was it imminent?

When the tanker dropped anchor, Dubviko ordered his submarine to descend to the bottom of the passage and wait. Dubviko and Zhukov took turns at the periscope observing the action above. They spotted a vessel, likely an American destroyer and watched. As they waited, they saw light signals. The signal first in Morse code: 'What ship?' Then the destroyer signalled a radio code.

Zhukov immediately signalled the radio room and gave the radio code. Radio crew returned the call quickly, 'The tanker is Norwegian registry bound for Galveston on the Texas coast. Vessel suffered a boiler casualty and in the process of preparing spare boiler.'

Americans ask if Norwegians needed help.

Response, no but thank you.

The next day the tanker raised its anchor and proceeded south. B-36 came off the bottom of the passage where it had waited. Dubviko ordered the submarine back into the tanker's wake and

followed. At 150 miles north of Haiti, B-36 turned west toward Cuba and departed from the tanker.

Anti-submarine warfare aircraft from the carriers *Essex* and *Randolph* had been formidable opponents. S-2F Trackers and Sea King helicopters flew overhead. Dubviko had been surprised to look through the periscope and see a P-3 Orion still loitering above. The P-3 had been in the air for up to 13 hours.

Zhukov noted the carelessness of US pilots' communications which his operators had intercepted without difficulty. Often even the carriers talked in clear communications. The American pilots' use of nicknames and call signs proved to be no challenge for the radio interceptors of B-36.

Zhukov's operators listened frequently to *Voice of America* and the *BBC* and even enjoyed music on the stations. Dubkov often listened to Russian-language broadcasts by *Radio Liberty* and *Voice of America*. The captain now realised the Americans had reacted quickly to Operation Anadyr and the plans to station weapons in Cuba. The broadcast also reported Soviet Special Envoy Anastas Mikoyan travelled to Cuba and Washington to soothe tensions. The leaders of B-36 realised at least 85 percent of the US Atlantic Fleet sailed above them.

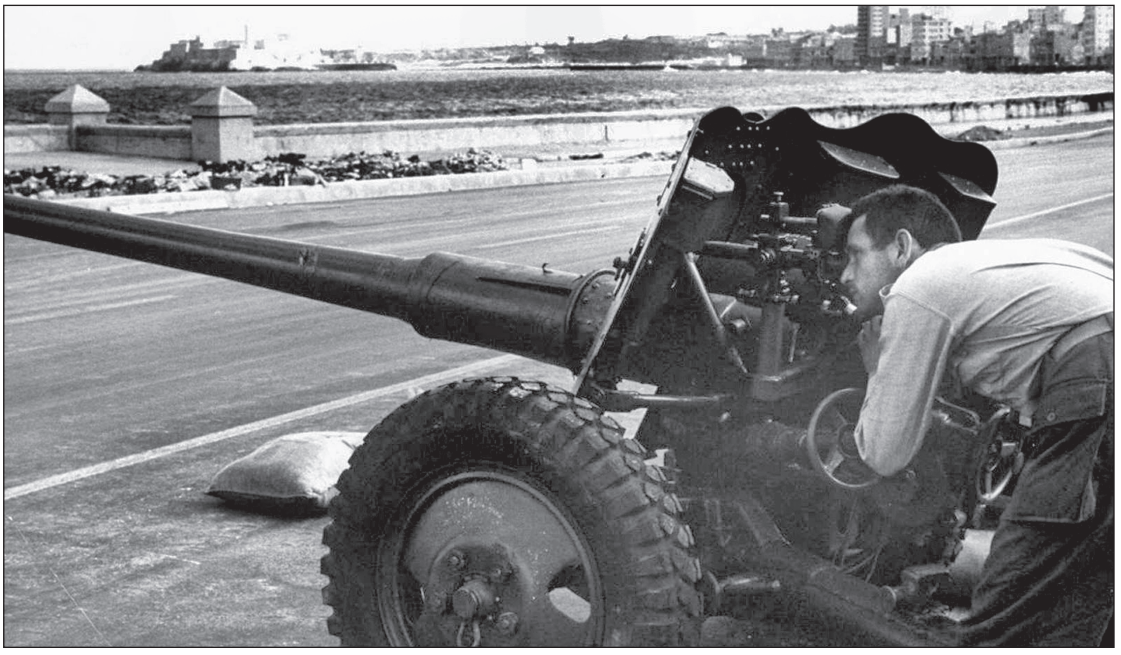
Fidel at the Centre Again

22 October 1962, Monday, Fidel Castro, Havana, Cuba

In Havana, immediately after President Kennedy's speech, Fidel Castro stormed into the offices of the newspaper, *Revolucion*, where he found late newspaper preparation in progress. This day the headline banner read in bold type: 'Preparation for Yankee Aggression. More Planes and Warships Head to Florida.' Castro, emboldened by the headlines, marked his own spin for the next day's news: 'Motherland or Death! We Will Win!'

Soviet generals in Cuba believed they were on the brink of war with the US. The Americans had imposed a naval blockade, and the Soviets in Cuba mobilised into a wartime mode immediately. Troops and trucks were on the road en route to their own units to prepare for a conflict. Soviet soldiers, however, failed to grasp the need to save a little island on the other side of the world from their homeland. No information had been shared with them, and there had been no threat to them.

Soviet troops in civilian wear posing as agriculture experts. (Albert Grandolini collection)



A FAR D-44 85mm gun is sighted-in. (Albert Grandolini collection)

The crew of an FAR D-44 85mm artillery piece train in a position overlooking the sea. (Albert Grandolini collection)

An FAR gun crew train to engage an enemy landing. (Albert Grandolini collection)

Fidel inspects preparations at a camouflaged emplacement for a Soviet-supplied ML-20 152mm gun-howitzer. (Albert Grandolini collection)

Fidel and Raul brief FAR troops. Note the artillery pieces in the background. (Albert Grandolini collection)

A parade displays FAR equipment with Second World War vintage T-34/85 tanks rolling by. (Albert Grandolini collection)

An emplaced Soviet-supplied 61-K 37mm anti-aircraft gun. (Albert Grandolini collection)

ExComm Advises the President

23 October 1962, Tuesday, 0100, the Soviet Embassy, Washington, DC

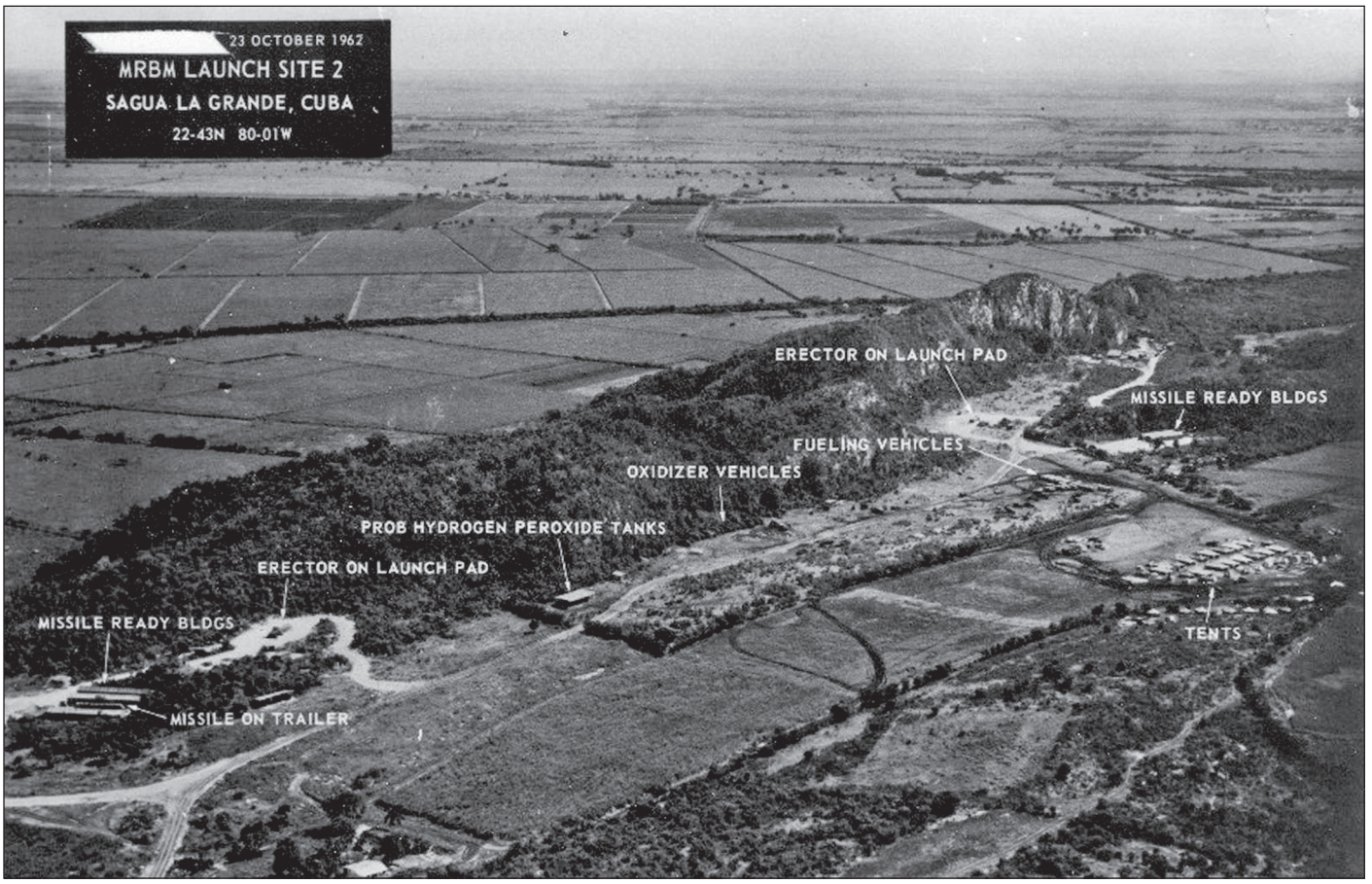
Anatoly Dobrynin met Robert Kennedy at the door of the embassy and welcomed the Attorney General. The ambassador recalled the younger Kennedy to be socially awkward and lacked a sense of humour. At that meeting, Robert Kennedy was angry that Khrushchev had lied to the President. When Khrushchev told the President only defensive weapons were being sent to Cuba, he deliberately deceived the elder Kennedy. The Attorney General asked what Soviet ship captains had been told to do when they reached the quarantine line. Dobrynin explained Soviet ship captains had been ordered not to comply with any demands for a search at sea. Robert Kennedy knew from his attendance at ExComm meetings the US was determined to stop Soviet ships by force if necessary.

Dobrynin immediately relayed all of Robert Kennedy's strong statements to Moscow. At the Kremlin, the discussion between Dobrynin and Kennedy demonstrated for Khrushchev that his options were only withdrawal or war.

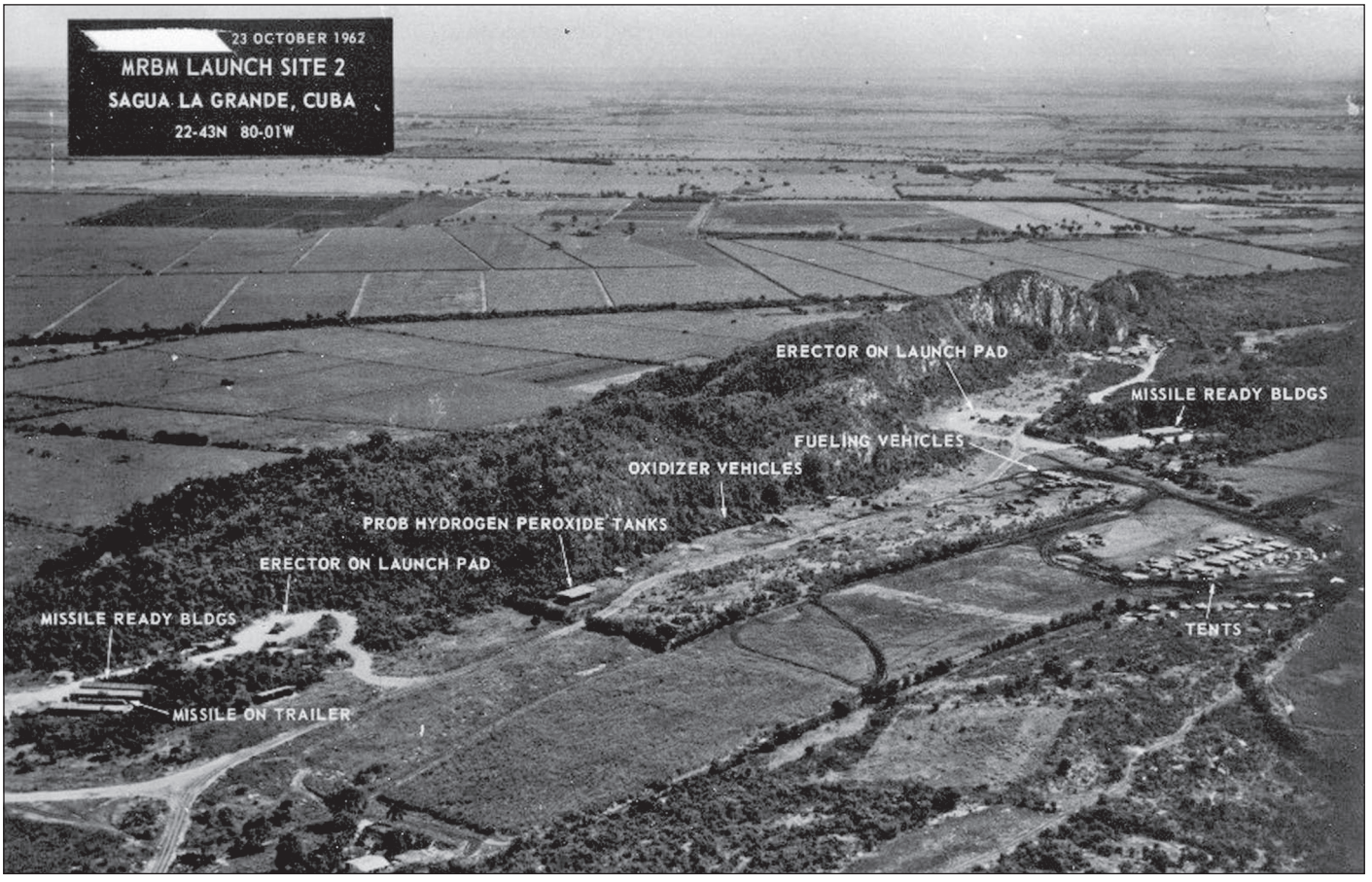
23 October 1962, Tuesday, 1000, The White House, ExComm Meeting

> 'I think it is very significant that we were here this morning. We've passed the one contingency: An immediate, sudden, irrational nuclear strike by the USSR.' – Secretary of State Dean Rusk

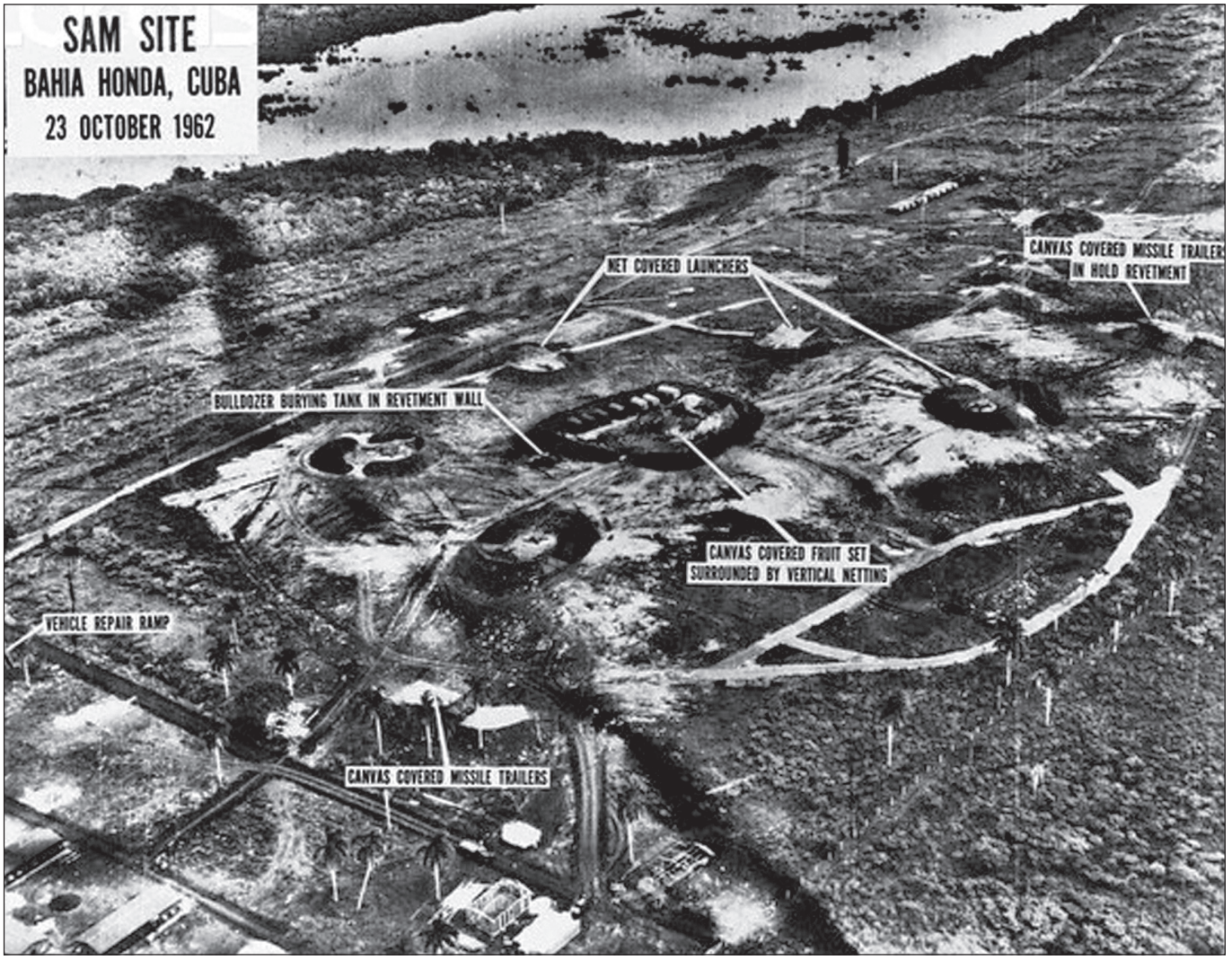
ExComm continued to meet with the President every morning at 1000. The group discussed the possibility that the Soviets would retaliate in Berlin. In addition, US reconnaissance planes flying over Cuba could be targeted with the SA-2 surface-to-air missiles from sites the Soviet technicians had been constructing recently. Intelligence indicated no general alert of Soviet forces in Cuba had been issued. However, they were beginning to camouflage their missile sites. President Kennedy also ordered preparations for a possible blockade of Berlin if that should be the Soviet Union's retaliatory response. An important topic of discussion for the group centred on a response if a U-2 was shot down over Cuba.



MRBM launch site #2, at Sagua La Grande, photographed on 23 October 1962. This photograph shows much of the ancillary equipment needed to prepare and fuel the Soviet missiles prior to their launch. (Albert Grandolini collection)



One of many astonishingly clear US aerial reconnaissance photographs taken during the crisis. This example taken on 23 October 1962 shows Soviet MRBM launch site #2, Sagua La Grande, Cuba. (Albert Grandolini collection)



Detail of the Soviet SAM site under construction at Bahia Honda, Cuba on 23 October 1962. (Albert Grandolini collection)

US Flotilla in the Atlantic

23 October 1962, USS Blandy (DD-943), in the North Atlantic

Blandy joined other squadron ships and Hunter-Killer Group Bravo as one of three groups assigned to ASW for the Atlantic Fleet. All ships turned south toward Cuba.

Blandy sailed alongside the *Essex* except when it was launching or recovering aircraft from its deck. Refuelling at 80 feet off the beam of the carrier caused tensions on the bridge. A tricky manoeuvre at best with lines between the two ships could become a catastrophe within the blink of an eye.

When taking on fuel, mail or spare parts, large groups of personnel and engineers gathered topside working lines. Mail, missing personnel and meals came onboard.[2] Captain Kelley always ordered the *Blandy* house flag, the 'Go to Hell Flag' as it was known, flying high. The *Essex* assembled a band on deck and serenaded the crews of both ships.

Another dramatic procedure involved the highline transfer, moving personnel to and from the carrier on a series of lines. The bosun chair was hauled by hand very carefully by crewmen moving the in-haul and out-haul lines. In times of turbulent, rolling seas, the transfer of a crewman could be dropped in the sea and a line quickly snapped like a slingshot of a carnival ride.

A helicopter from the carrier called the 'Holy Helo' on Sunday transferred the Squadron Chaplain to each ship for religious services. *Blandy* and other destroyers had no helicopter landing pad which required the chaplain to be picked up and winched to the helicopter by cable. At times the chaplain had even been dunked in the process of transfer.

23 October 1962, USS Sperry (AS-12), Newport, Rhode Island

The *Blandy's* sister ship, submarine tender USS *Sperry* (AS-12), also participated in the recall from liberty. The *Sperry*'s officers had attended a formal event at the Officers Club and still wore their mess dress uniforms. Both ships sailed into the Atlantic headed south.

The next day the executive officer reported a TOP SECRET Operation Order arriving soon. The Communications Officer decoded the message in detail, a 200-page order. No interim instructions gave detail of the ship's responsibilities during blockade. Absent instructions from fleet headquarters, the commanders screened all ships they encountered. Any ship bound for Cuba would be stopped and searched. Materials identified as likely to be part of a Cuban war event would be seized, including guns, tanks, missiles, explosives, oil, gasoline and diesel fuel. Two boarding parties were assigned to execute search and seizure. Participants were issued sidearms. Captain Kelley from the *Blandy* said he intended to shoot the rudder off any freighter that resisted boarding. A system of signals between boarding party members would indicate any resistance encountered.

A lookout crewman reported sighting one white light. The signalman sent a message, 'Who are you?'

The response: 'Norwegian freighter.'
'What is your destination?'
'Panama Canal.'
The freighter asked, 'Who are you?'
'US Navy warship.'
'Godspeed.'

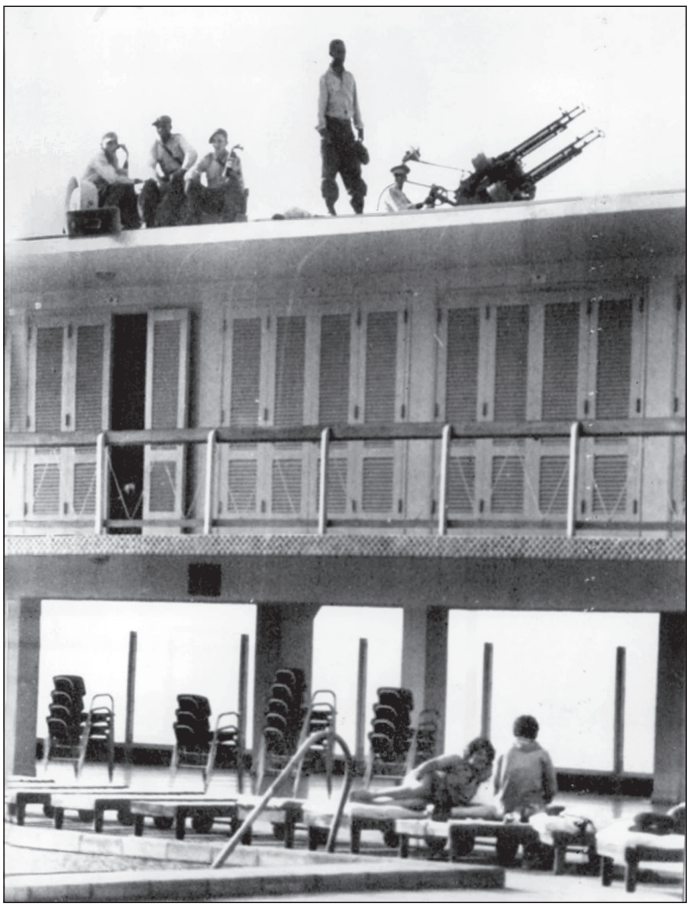
The OAS convened representatives in Punta del Este, Uruguay to discuss and vote for supporting the order of the quarantine. Latin American countries demonstrated unity and support for the recommendations of the US. Some OAS countries even contributed troops, supplies and ships.

The World Hears from Fidel Again

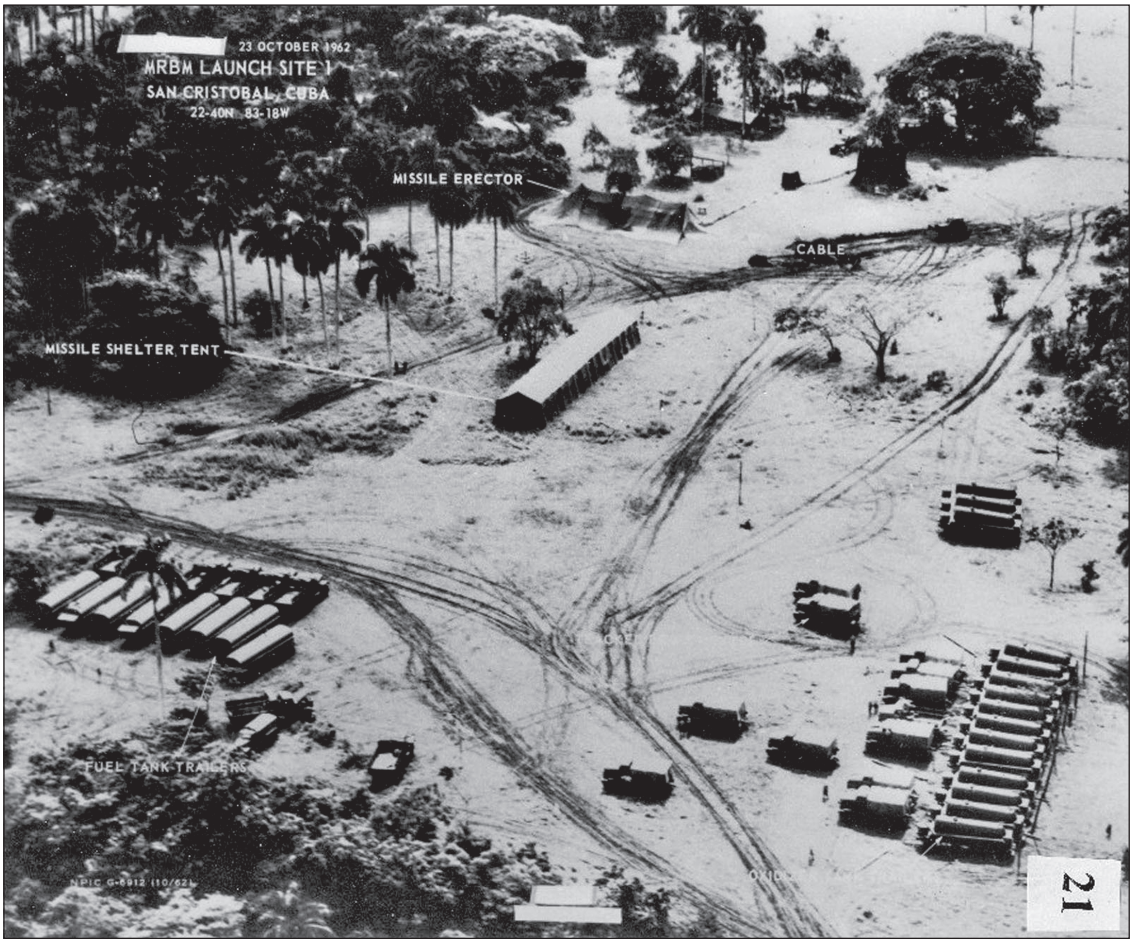
23 October 1962, Tuesday, Havana, Cuba

> 'I believe Khrushchev's decision to bring the missiles to Cuba was to improve the correlation of forces.' – Fidel Castro

The optimism in Washington, DC for a resolution to the crisis did not sit well in Havana. Fidel believed the continued US military preparations still indicated a possible airstrike and invasion to his island. He wrote to Khrushchev from a bomb shelter in the Soviet Embassy in Havana. Castro's letter, translated and transmitted by Soviet Ambassador to Cuba, Alexander Alekseyev, indicated a pre-emptive strike against the US would be necessary if any military action should come to Cuba. The letter stated: 'If the imperialists invade Cuba with the goal of occupying it, the danger that aggressive policy poses for humanity is so great that following that event the Soviet Union should never allow the circumstances in which the imperialists could launch the first nuclear strike.'



An FAR quad 12.7mm M53 anti-aircraft gun of Czechoslovak origin placed on top of a civilian building. (Albert Grandolini collection)



A Soviet MRBM launch site at San Cristobal, Cuba, photographed on 23 October 1962. (Albert Grandolini collection)

US Army personnel prepare to deploy for a possible invasion of Cuba. The tracked vehicle is an M501 tractor used to transport and handle HAWK anti-aircraft missiles. (Albert Grandolini collection)

A US HAWK missile launcher prepared for action on a beachfront in Florida. (Albert Grandolini collection)

23 October 1962, Tuesday Evening, The White House, Washington, DC

> 'Mobs of protestors showed up in London instead of Havana. Two thousand people stormed the American Embassy.' – Secretary Dean Rusk

The first day of quarantine posed two issues: The quarantine line had to be established far enough from Cuba to avoid attack by Cuban Air Force flights. The second was the need to find, stop and search a ship carrying weapons. The *Kimovsk* was targeted.

The Quarantine is Implemented

24 October, Wednesday, President John Kennedy, The White House, Washington, DC

> 'There will be no firing of any kind at a Soviet ship without my personal authority.' – Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara to CNO Admiral George Anderson

ExComm met with the President when he expressed his concern for any pilots that may be shot down and protocol for notification of families. He asked for a report about US aircraft dispersal. General Maxwell Taylor distributed photographs that showed Russian and Cuban aircraft strangely lined up wing tip to wing tip making them vulnerable to attack. President Kennedy ordered General Taylor to have a U-2 fly over US bases in Florida to ensure aircraft there had been adequately dispersed.

During ExComm meetings, it became apparent there was a disconnect between the Pentagon and The White House. While the President exchanged correspondence with Khrushchev seeking a non-violent solution to the crisis, the generals of JCS believed it was a perfect opportunity to remove Castro.

Tensions between the generals and admirals with the Secretary of Defense increased due in part to earlier exchanges. Soon after McNamara assumed office, he had cancelled production of the Navy's F6D Missilier aircraft and questioned the merits of nuclear-powered submarines. Anderson strongly believed the civilian interference in a military operation to be counter-productive.

McNamara declared the most important early action was one that required the longest lead time. Radio chatter of intercepted merchant vessels and cargo ships had identified a need for 135 ships. The downside of the plan would be the disruption of US shipping, such as the lumber industry in the Pacific Northwest of the US.

The President consulted with retired General Lucius Clay who had served as head of the US zone in Germany. The two leaders discussed Khrushchev's response to Kennedy's speech which insisted the arms were strictly for Cuba's defence. The President shared with Clay his belief that Berlin was a key issue to which the general concurred.

Rusk believed the implementation of the quarantine line shocked and confused Khrushchev. The Premier had made no contingency plans if his original order failed.

Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatrick phoned the President and reported his expectation that the Russian ships were not going to stop at the quarantine line. The question was what the Navy could or could not do if the line was challenged. Gilpatrick explained the need to control cameras onboard the Navy ships. Photos from sailors could be an embarrassment to the US.

Good news from the OAS reported the US resolution had received unanimous support.

The State Department drafted the response to Khrushchev's 23 October letter. It stated, 'I hope you will issue immediate and necessary instruction to your ships to observe the terms of the quarantine established by the order of the OAS. We have no desire to seize or fire upon your vessels.' At the end of the letter, Kennedy added, 'I am concerned that we both show prudence and do nothing to allow events to make the situation more difficult to control than it is now.'

Members of ExComm and JCS assumed all Soviet ships would be subject to inspection and any ship refusing would be forced to yield. Taylor demanded, 'We'll shoot their rudders off.' McNamara sounded a warning, 'General Taylor, we want to be very careful here.'

The President again emphasised, 'No one on any of our boats will have cameras. Make sure the word gets out about that.'

As if there was not enough stress within ExComm, CIA Director John McCone announced Soviet submarines moving into the Caribbean. The line of interception at 800 miles (1,287.47 kilometres) would be only a few hours away. The President directed McNamara to move the interception line to 500 miles (804.67 kilometres). Russian ships continued to sail on to Cuba. Photos taken by U-2 aircraft the previous day were analysed at NPIC, and film alone stretched more than 25 miles. Clearly seen on this film were launch pads, missiles, concrete boxes and nuclear storage bunkers. It was obvious that within a few days the launch pads would be ready for operation.

An increase in TAC flights began, and SAC ordered over 60 B-52 Stratofortress bombers to be on airborne alert. TAC forces in Florida went on one-hour alert and prepared to go on 15-minute alert with pilots suited up and waiting in the cockpit of their assigned aircraft for launch orders.

24 October 1962, USS Blandy, Northeast of Caicos Passage

Destroyer Squadron 24 counted the USS *Blandy, Keppler, Charles P. Sperry* and the aircraft carrier, USS *Essex* as they patrolled an area in an arc northeast of Cuba. The outer limits of the quarantine spread 500 miles around Cuba. The ASW group sailed from Newport, more than 1,000 miles south at 25 knots.

With obvious unrest, tensions among the crews were high. War could be only hours away. Torpedoes waited ready to launch if ordered. While the sailors went about their assigned duties, the ship at sea felt comfortable amid good food and camaraderie.

Captain Kelley studied the charts in the navigation area where he saw Hunter-Killer Group Bravo 200 miles from the Caicos Passage. He looked forward to seeing his team in action and he knew they could handle any situation.

Two years earlier, *Blandy* won the competition for ASW Excellence and was awarded the Marjorie Sterett Navy League Atlantic Fleet trophy.[4] It was a great source of pride for Kelley and his crew. To celebrate the big win, Kelley hosted a Beer Bust in Newport for all the crew.

Blandy's sailors had been briefed to expect contact with Soviet submarines in the area. A P-2 Neptune had spotted a Soviet naval oiler.[4] A Soviet Zulu-class submarine had been photographed refuelling from the oiler.

A system of identifying submarines had been devised during the Second World War in the Atlantic. Analysts at the ASW Force Headquarters at Norfolk reviewed the reports of contacts to determine prior contact with the same vessels. At this time a new underwater sound detection system called Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS) was in place. It operated through hydrophones placed on the seabed in the North Atlantic. The system then was monitored by Ocean Systems Atlantic in Norfolk. However, few

submarines had been tracked into the Atlantic that provided enough data to be valuable to improve the SOSUS system. With little data to identify the Soviet submarines, the responsibility fell to ASW aircraft and P-2 Neptunes out of Iceland, the Azores, and Naval Air Stations on the East Coast of the US from Maine to southern Florida. The British Royal Air Force flew the Shackelton, a long-range maritime patrol aircraft, based out of northern Scotland, over the North Atlantic, Iceland, the Shetlands and Faeroes. The Canadian Air Force flew their Argus CP-107 Hunters from Nova Scotia.

The intelligence plot on *Blandy* showed several Soviet merchant ships approaching the blockade ring of US ships around Cuba. However, there were no Soviet escorts visible in the area. Unknown to *Blandy*'s crew, four of Captain Agafonov's Foxtrot-class submarines were already near the quarantine line. In fact, Shumkov's B-130 was only 50 miles from the *Essex*.

24 October 1962, Naval Command Center, the Pentagon, Arlington, Virginia

At the Pentagon the CNO's Flag Plot intelligence officers plotted courses of several Soviet merchant ships approaching the quarantine perimeter.[5] Each red tag on the chart represented a Soviet merchant ship. Soon the surface looked like paint splatters with the numerous tags shown to identify other vessels.

The US Naval Oceanographic Office issued 'Notice to Mariners 45-62, Special Warning 32, Submarine Surfacing and Identification Procedures when contacted by Quarantine Forces in the general vicinity of Cuba.' The message reported the Quarantine Forces would drop four or five hand grenades accompanied by an international code 'IDKCA' which meant 'Rise to the Surface.' The submerged submarine should surface on hearing the signal.

24 October 1962, Soviet Embassy, Military Attaché Office, Washington, DC

Vice Admiral Bekrenyev read the message and ordered it to be sent to Main Navy Headquarters in Moscow immediately and recommended it to be broadcast with urgency to the fleet and submarines.

24 October 1962, USS Blandy, North Atlantic

The always vocal Captain Kelley read the message and exploded: 'Next they will want us to give him (the Soviet submarine) ice cream and cookies then kiss his ass. Ought to just blow the son of a bitch out of the water.'

24 October 1962, 1000, CNO Flag Plot, US Navy Command Center, the Pentagon, Washington, DC

The order for the blockade of Cuba was implemented. Secretary of Defense McNamara believed the Navy withheld information from him. CNO Admiral George Anderson quietly told the Secretary of Defense that the Navy would take care of the details of the blockade and civilian leaders did not need to be concerned. McNamara, irritated with the CNO's response went directly to the Flag Plot in the Pentagon. The Secretary of Defense shot off rapid-fire questions faster than the personnel there could reply. Admiral Anderson arrived in the Center and became the target for the questions. While McNamara asked questions, the admiral responded with the same intensity. Extremely irritated about being challenged, the admiral grabbed a copy of the US Navy Regulations and responded, 'The Navy has been running blockades since the days of John Paul Jones.'[6]

5
TOE TO TOE

Confrontations

24 October 1962, Wednesday, 1000, ExComm Meeting, The White House

> 'This is not the appropriate time to blow up a ship, so let's think a little more about it. Isn't there some way we can avoid having our first exchange with a Russian submarine?' – President John F. Kennedy

ExComm had received recent intelligence that Russian ships moved closer to the 500-mile line of quarantine. All members of the group felt significant stress and the President more than most. Discovery of two Soviet submarines near the line alerted CNO Anderson who reported immediately to the fleet commanders: We must keep our heavy ships, especially our carriers, from being surprised by attack from Soviet subs.

At that point in the crisis, the Navy's operational centres, Flag Plot (FP) and Intelligence Plot (IP) hummed with round-the-clock activity observing ASW units attempting to force the Soviet subs to the surface.

At 1000 Secretary McNamara announced two Russian ships were approaching the quarantine line. An alarming report indicated a Russian submarine moved between the two ships. The aircraft carrier USS *Essex* with helicopter support sailed to the site from its port at Guantánamo Bay. The *Essex* sent sonar signals to the Russian submarine. If it refused to respond, depth charges with explosives would be dropped until the vessel surfaced. At 1025 a messenger brought a note to John McCone. He read the message and announced, 'Mr. President, we have a preliminary report, some of the Russian ships have stopped dead in the Atlantic.' At 1032 six ships had turned back en route toward the Soviet Union. A short time later the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) officer present reported 20 ships had completely stopped at the edge of the quarantine. Orders went to the *Essex* to allow the Russian ships the opportunity to reverse course.

Robert Kennedy reported that the President showed a pained expression, but he asked the group if there was any way to avoid an exchange with the Russian submarine. McNamara responded, 'Our commanders have been instructed to avoid a conflict, if at all possible, but this is what we must expect.' With concern mounting in the meeting, ExComm members faced another issue to consider – Berlin. They believed Khrushchev would immediately shut down Berlin if the outcome in Cuba was unsuccessful.

Later that day, the ships continuing were identified as tankers. The tanker *Bucharest* – a Soviet vessel despite its name – identified itself and was allowed to proceed, though the President ordered US ships in the area to shadow it.

President Kennedy received unrequested advice and opinions from ExComm, and the Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations, U Thant of Burma, who suggested the quarantine be lifted for several weeks if the Russians agreed not to send missiles to Cuba. The President quickly responded, 'The crisis was created by the secret introduction of offensive weapons into Cuba. The answer is in the removal of the weapons. The US would agree to discussions, but missiles had to be removed first.'

Adlai Stevenson presented photos to the UN General Assembly to confront Soviet Ambassador Valerian Zorin. Initially Zorin refused to respond. The photos of the Russian missiles in Cuba showed the weapons with shocking effect.

Zorin made the following statement to the United Nations Security Council:

> When Mr. Stevenson today attempted to accuse the Soviet Union as the prime cause for these aggressive actions on the part of the United States, I should like to draw attention of the Council to a completely surprising fact. On 15 October the President of the United States had in his hands incontrovertible information. What happened after that? On 18 October the President of the United States was receiving the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gromyko. One may ask why did the President, in receiving the minister, not say a word to the Minister with respect to incontrovertible facts at that time?

Stevenson directed his question to Zorin, 'You have denied the missiles exist, and I want to know if I have understood you correctly.'

Zorin responded, 'You will have your answer in due course.'

Stevenson firmly replied, 'I am prepared to wait for my answer until hell freezes over, if that's your decision. And I am also prepared to present the evidence to this audience.'

The President decided to exert additional pressure by sending eight low-flying aircraft over Cuba morning and evening to supplement photos taken by the U-2s. US aircraft also followed the Russian submarines and forced them to surface near US ships. Russian submarines in the area were followed and harassed by US destroyers that dropped depth charges. The count of US naval forces in the area totalled 25 destroyers, two cruisers, seven submarines, four aircraft carriers and many smaller support ships. The President then ordered 24 troop carrier squadrons of the Air Force Reserve to active duty. The course of the conflict now rested with Khrushchev in the coming hours.

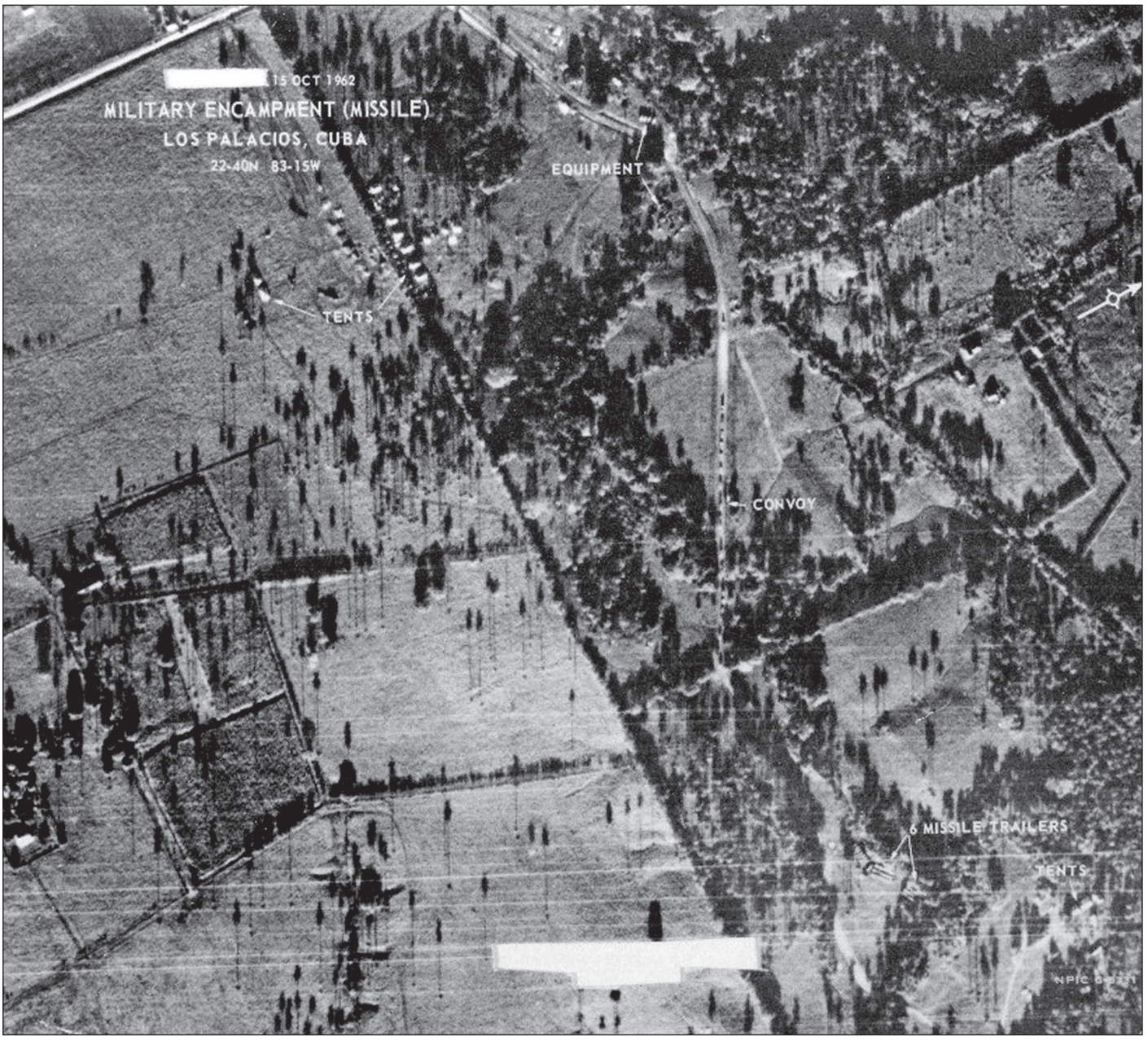
24 October 1962, Soviet Embassy, Washington, DC

Ambassador Dobrynin and his staff watched American television showing a Soviet tanker as it sailed closer to the quarantine line. The television announcer spoke with an emotional voice as he reported the details of the moment. The tanker crossed the quarantine line and the destroyers stood still.

24 October 1962, USS Blandy, in the Caicos Passage

Some of the crew gathered to listen to *Voice of America* news. The radio announcer reported an interview with Premier Khrushchev and Westinghouse International President, William E. Knox. The Premier announced, 'If the Americans stopped and searched a single Soviet ship, it would be an act of piracy, and I would order submarines to sink US ships.' Knox had nothing to say after that comment and promptly departed.

Photographs of missile sites in Cuba are displayed at the UN Security Council by Ambassador Stevenson. (Albert Grandolini collection)



An aerial reconnaissance photograph taken on 15 October 1962 showing a Soviet military encampment at Los Palacios in Cuba. In the bottom right of the photograph are six missile trailers. (Albert Grandolini collection)

As Captain Kelley sat in the wardroom eating his meal, he shouted, 'We are going to breakout live Hedgehogs on the launcher spigots.' Everyone else in the room became completely silent. Kelley continued to sail in the direction of the *Yuri Gagarin* and *Komiles* and expected to be within a visual in one hour. He gave the order to prepare to board and search the target vessels. Side arms and ammunition were issued to those designated to board Soviet ships. Two boarding teams assembled on deck.

As the *Yuri Gagarin* came closer, a helicopter from the *Essex* hovered in the distance and the S-2F Tracker flew over the submarine contact. The submarine manoeuvred between the two freighters. The order came over the speakers for the boarding party to assemble on the fantail. 'This is not a drill.'

Suddenly, new orders sounded over the speaker. 'Turn immediately and proceed at full power to the south to intercept a Soviet tanker the *Bucharest*.' Although previously cleared across the quarantine line, the decision was to shadow the tanker. It was then only 100 miles from Cuba. *Blandy's* new orders directed it to intercept the *Bucharest* and prepare to board and search. Information at that time became confused. *Blandy* learned another destroyer guided by a P-2 Neptune had intercepted the *Bucharest*. The tanker reported to the destroyer it carried heating oil for Havana. It was rather curious the tanker carried heating oil given the temperature in Cuba at the time was 95 degrees Fahrenheit (35 degrees Celsius).

While the *Blandy*'s crew awaited new orders, Washington's generals and planners revised the direction. The *Bucharest* continued to Havana.

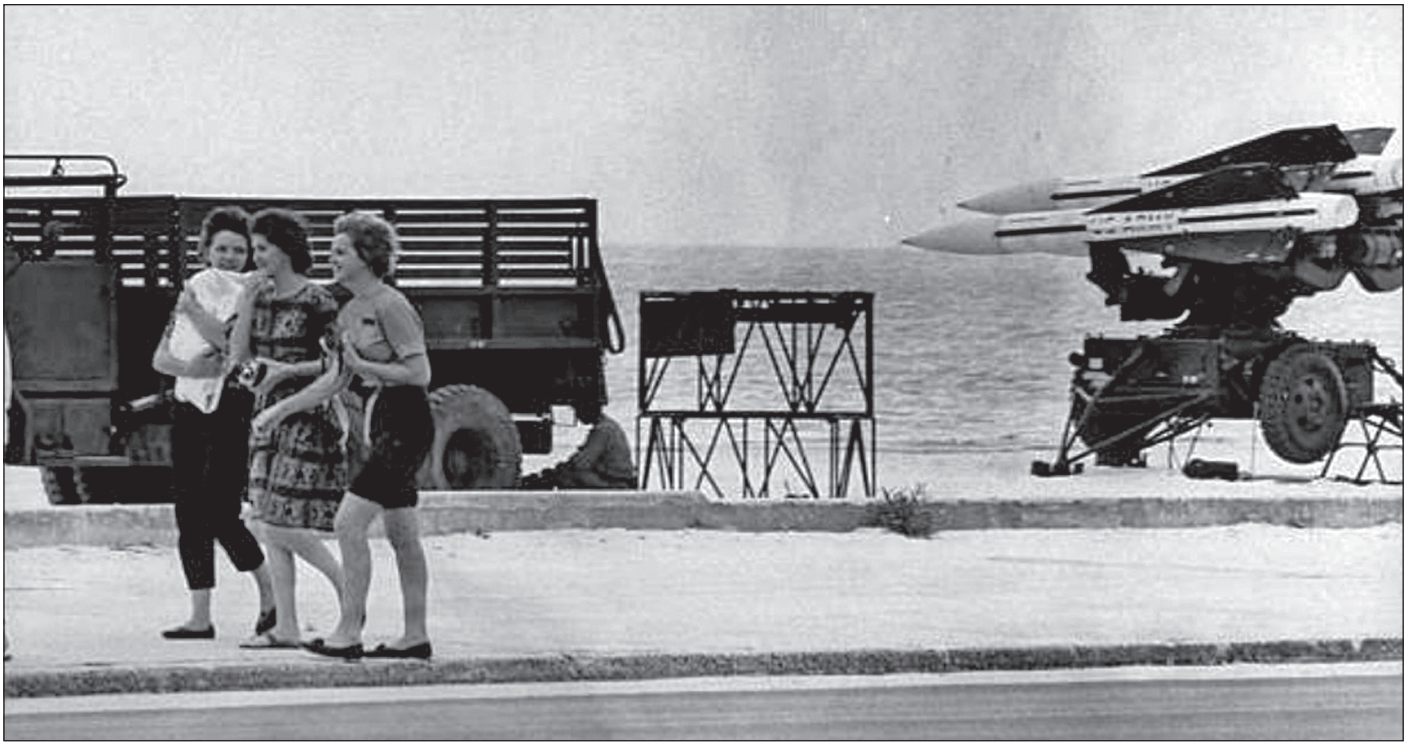
Khrushchev Responds to Kennedy

24 October 1962, Wednesday, Moscow, Soviet Union and Washington, DC

At 1800 Khrushchev's response arrived. Obviously composed by Khrushchev himself, it was full of incoherent emotion. The letter made references to avoid petty passions. He repeatedly stated the missiles were for defence, and continued:

> If indeed war should break out, then it would not be in our power to stop it, for such is the logic of war. If assurances were given that the President of the US would not participate in an attack on Cuba and the blockade lifted, then the question of the removal or destruction of the missile sites in Cuba would then be an entirely different question. Despite our differences, we should compete peacefully. Soviet Union ships contained no weapons because they were already there. No more weapons were sent to Cuba and those already there would be withdrawn or destroyed and you (the US) withdraw your blockade.

After examination of the message, ExComm met late on Friday night. The State Department analysed the message and made recommendations for a response. ExComm finally decided to close the meeting for the evening and convene again early next morning.



Civilians walk along a beach in Florida, one carrying a babe in arms, as troops prepare a HAWK AA missile launcher. (Albert Grandolini collection)

25 October 1962, 0200, President Kennedy Telephones Ambassador Stevenson

President Kennedy called Ambassador Stevenson at the UN in New York and asked him to pass on the following information to Secretary-General U Thant: 'We hope that Khrushchev will hold his ships out of the interception area for a limited time to permit discussion of an agreement.'

25 October 1962, 0900, ExComm Meeting, The White House, Washington, DC

At the opening of the meeting, McNamara declared: 'We should establish the precedent by boarding a British ship first, then board a Soviet ship carrying offensive weapons.'

Admiral Anderson received instructions at 1000 to follow the *Bucharest* and stop and board the *Grozny* which depended on the boarding of *Bucharest.* The Pentagon announced the interception of *Bucharest* and allowed it to continue to sail on.

General Lemay received authorisation at 1040 to resume low-level recon flights. When General Taylor returned to his office, he reported, 'Last week the meeting talked about the blockade to bring down Castro. Now Rusk says the blockade is only to keep out offensive weapons then the mission is accomplished.'

President Kennedy shared with ExComm that UN Secretary-General U Thant's proposal was at a standstill. When all members agreed, construction in Cuba and the quarantine would be shut down. McCone fired back, 'The missile threat must be removed before we shut down the quarantine.'

Ambassador Thompson cautioned the US should not expect a bunch of U Thant's Burmese citizens to act as inspectors in Cuba and have the interest of the US on their agenda. At this point the President had put himself in a bad position. He stated he saw no path to peaceful removal of the missiles, though he also wanted to keep the path to peace open.

General Taylor expressed the opinions of the JCS generals to deal with the increased activity, such as the night photography over Cuba. Rusk countered, 'I believe it would be advisable to explore the politics to ensure Khrushchev has turned down the three conditions. No more construction, no more quarantine and no more arms shipments.'

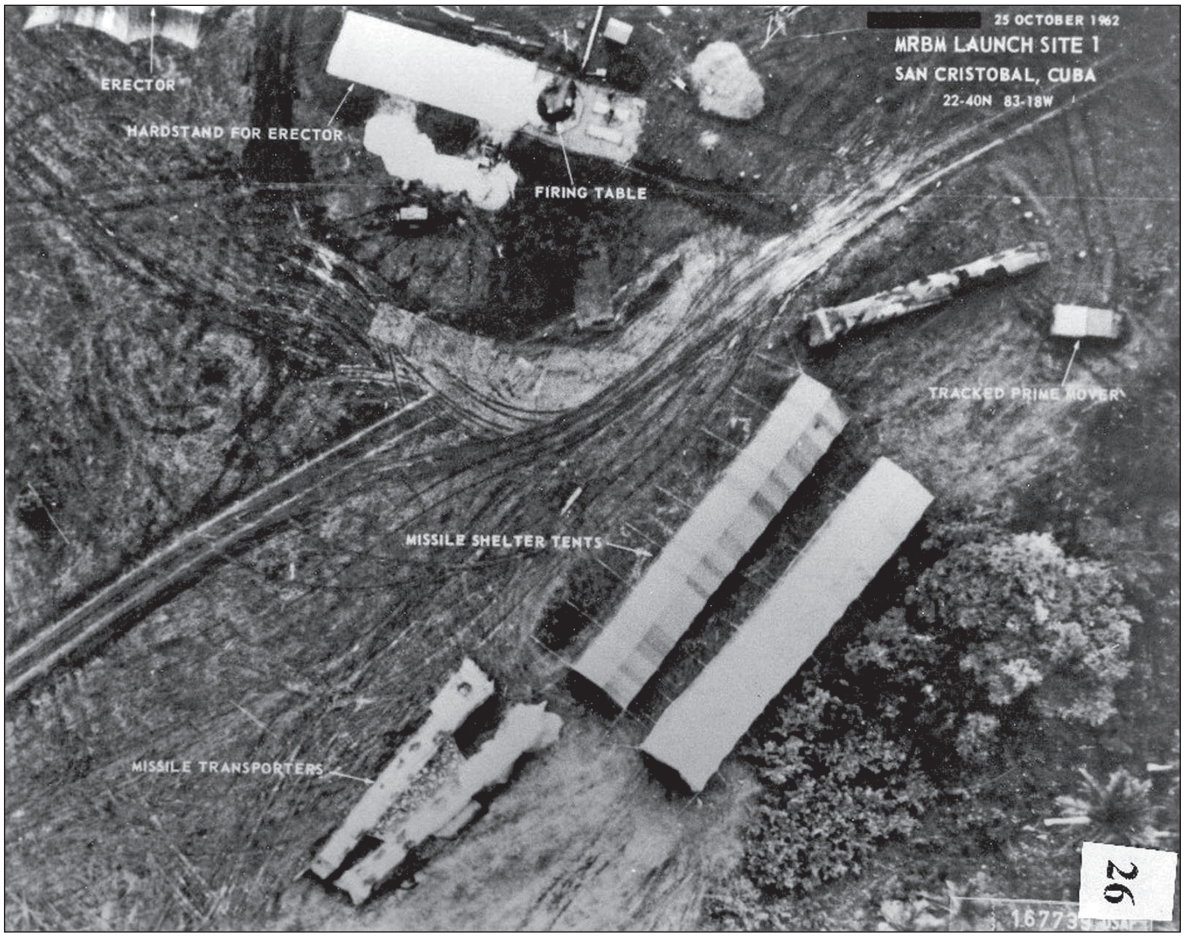
Although a very dangerous time had passed without incident, the blockade had not been challenged.

Washington Post columnist Walter Lippman wrote in his column, 'The US should make a trade to resolve the crisis.' George Ball met with Lippman and fed specific information to the newsman. Such information could not be overtly passed to a journalist by the administration. Britain and Austria took on the idea as well. Austria's Foreign Minister, Bruno Kreisky, concurred with Lippman's proposal. Even Khrushchev jumped on the idea and offered to remove his missiles from Cuba in exchange for dismantling missiles in Turkey.

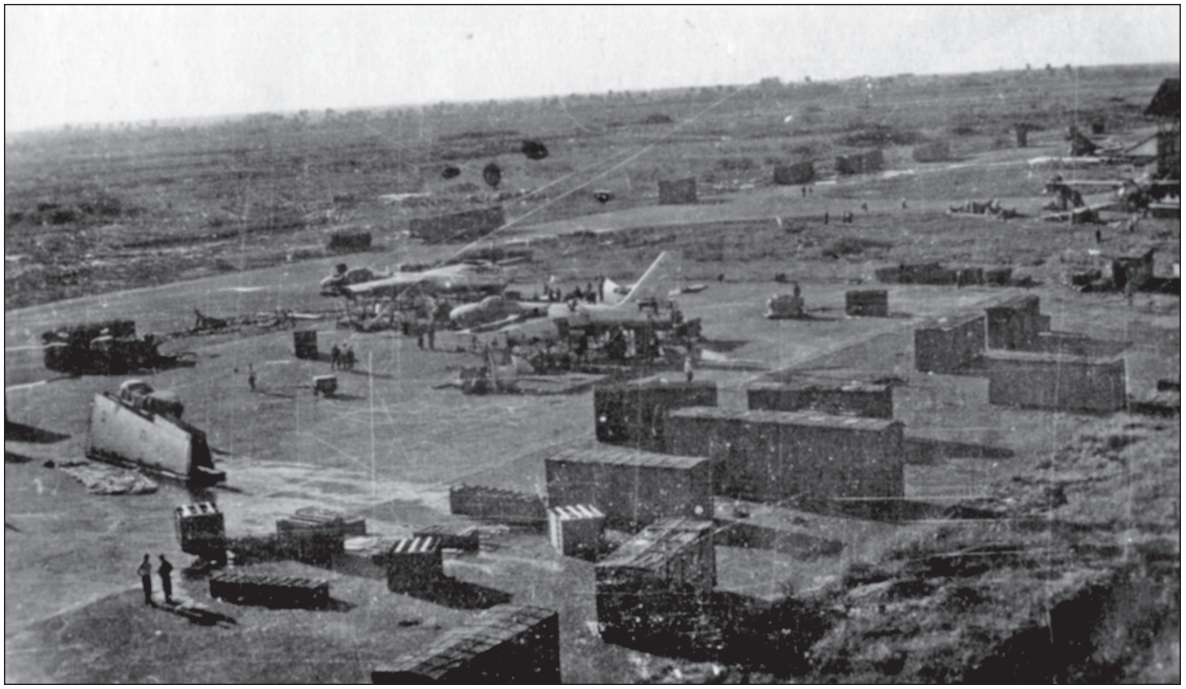
25 October 1962, Thursday, Cuba, Washington, DC, and Moscow

Aerial photographs taken at night revealed work on the missile sites in Cuba continued at a rapid pace. The following day Ilyushin Il-28 bombers were photographed while being uncrated and assembled. US intelligence revealed rapid construction on two sites for the SS-4 MRBMs and two additional sites for the SS-5 IRBMs. With this recent information, the CIA reported to ExComm that it appeared some of the missiles in Cuba had become operational.

Communications between President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev flew both ways. Kennedy accused the Soviet Union of placing operational missiles in Cuba. Khrushchev responded, 'The USA's actions are outright banditry and imperialism.'



Detail of equipment photographed at a Soviet MRBM launch site, San Cristobal, Cuba 25 October 1962. (Albert Grandolini collection)



Two Soviet Il-28 bombers being assembled in Cuba. (Albert Grandolini collection)

Soviet Submarines Move to the Caribbean

25 October 1962, Headquarters Main Navy Staff, Gribayedovo Street, Moscow

Admiral Leonid Rybalko worried about his submarines headed for the centre of a possible showdown in the Caribbean with the US. He needed intelligence information that had been sent on the fleet broadcast. Captain Agafonov was in the dark. Rybalko stayed at headquarters for four days awaiting news of units of Operation Kama. With no updates forthcoming, he travelled to Moscow by train for answers.

First Deputy Chief of Staff Admiral Fokin, the Director of Operation Kama greeted Rybalko and directed the entourage to a circular room with 15 chairs occupied by officers of various ranks representing Main Staff directorates.

Rybalko stared at the map on the wall showing an area near the Bahamas and the Atlantic Ocean. He asked the admiral, 'Have Agafonov's vessels been apprised of the current situation? Have they been advised of the presence of American ASW Hunter-Killer groups?'

The admiral reported that Fleet Commander in Chief, Admiral Gorshkov had prohibited dissemination of information on submarine broadcasts. Forkin reminded the group that the last order to Agafonov directed him to station his vessel off the Bahamas instead of Mariel.

Rybalko's concern grew as he thought of Agafonov's vessels in the area of the US ships. A teletype message had been translated from American broadcasts. The Americans would drop explosives to force Soviet submarines to surface and identify their vessel. The group concluded a message had to be sent immediately to Agafonov's submarine in direct opposition to earlier orders to remain covert.

Rybalko expressed his opinion firmly, 'Agafonov must be warned.'

Fokin reminded only routine traffic could be transmitted. 'Remember, Commander in Chief Gorshkov ordered no message that will give away our location.'

The officers still had concern for the Ministry of Merchant Marine (MORFLOT) transports delivering personnel and equipment to Cuba. Rybalko determined he could not permit his four submarines and their sailors to be in such grave danger. He immediately reached for a tablet of paper and began a message. The admiral remembered the combat mantra: 'You own absolute loyalty to the men under your command just as they are loyal to follow your orders blindly.' When he finished writing, Rybalko handed it to the communications lieutenant who expressed reluctance to send it on the noon or midnight broadcasts.

Rybalko said, 'I am ordering you to send it. Do it now and I will take full responsibility for the action.'

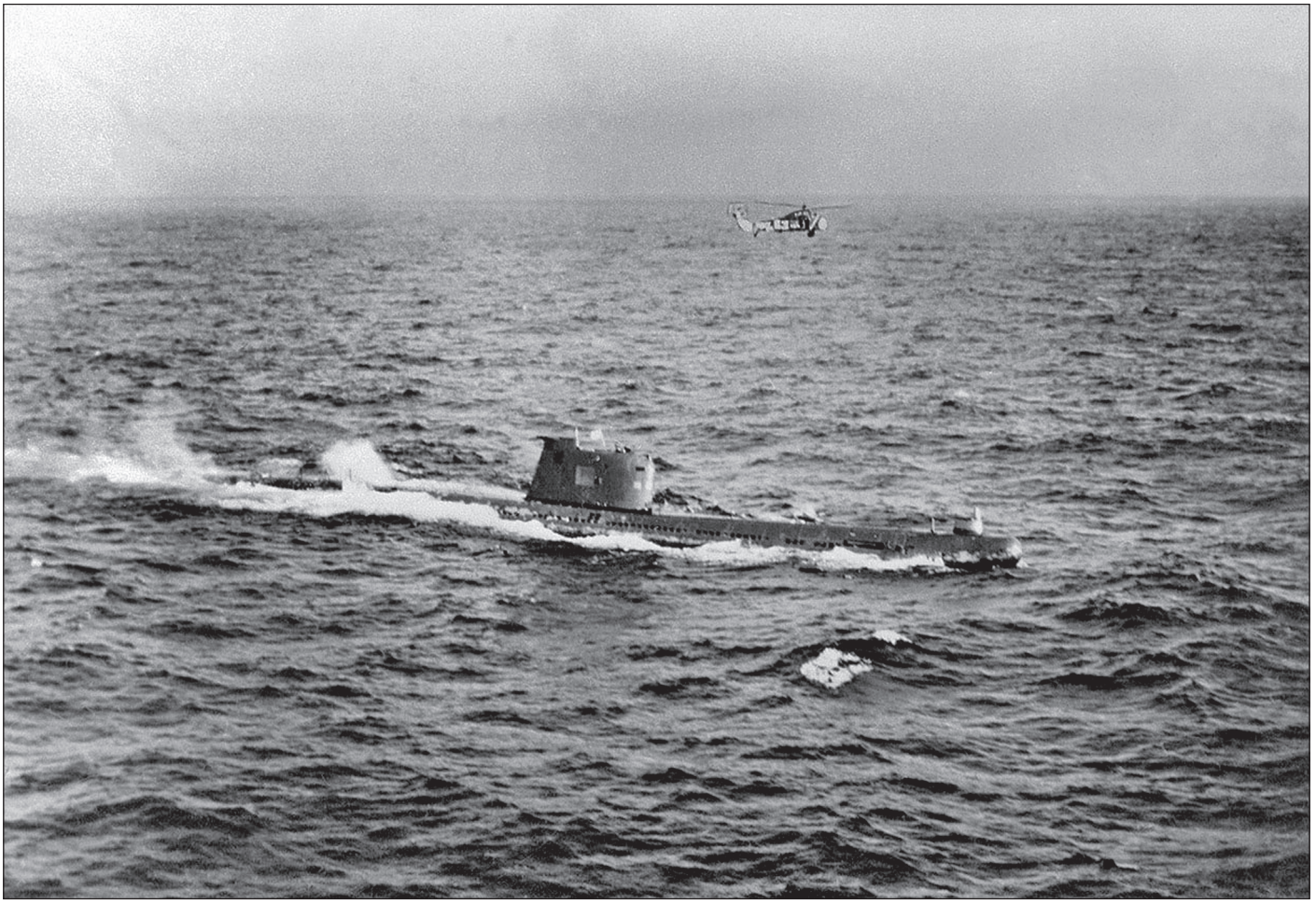
25 October 1962, 0900, ExComm Meeting, The White House, Washington, DC

At the opening of the meeting McNamara declared, 'We should establish the precedent by boarding a British ship first then board a Soviet ship carrying offensive weapons.'

25 October 1962, Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Join the Action

Prime Minister of Canada, John Diefenbaker, had been advised by US Ambassador William Butterworth of the crisis brewing in the Caribbean. Diefenbaker, a loyal supporter of his American neighbour, immediately offered assistance. The RCN and RCAF assisted the US Navy in establishing the blockade. Though the RCN and RCAF did not act under specific orders of the US, Canadian

A US Navy P-2H Neptune flying over a Soviet transport vessel. The US system for designating military equipment was changed during 1962 and the P-2H had previously been known as the P2V-7. (Albert Grandolini collection)



A Soviet submarine of the Foxtrot-class with a US helicopter overhead, likely a naval variant of the Sikorsky H-34 Choctaw family. (Albert Grandolini collection)

commanders assumed responsibility for honouring the military commitments to their American ally. Canada deployed one aircraft carrier, 13 destroyers, nine frigates, two submarines and six minesweepers. The RCN assumed patrol off the eastern coast of the US to allow more US Navy ships to establish the blockade in the Caribbean. RCN frigates were dispatched to the mid-Atlantic with 10 US submarines to counter any moves of Soviet submarine forces. RCAF deployed 44 aircraft to patrol the North Atlantic and monitor Soviet ships in the area.

26 October 1962, Friday, President John Kennedy, The White House, Washington, DC

> 'I'm getting more concerned all the time. They have a substantial number of these weapons so they could start at dark and have missiles pointing at us the following morning.'
> – Director of the CIA John McCone

By the morning of 26 October, Kennedy's conviction began to falter. With continuing construction at the missile sites in Cuba, it appeared unlikely the Soviets had any plans to withdraw their weapons. The President offered his opinion, 'I believe the quarantine by itself is unlikely to induce the Soviets to remove their missiles. We will get the Soviet strategic missiles out of Cuba only by invading the island or trading something.'

26 October 1962, Friday, 1300, John Scali, Television Network Reporter, and KGB Washington Chief Aleksandr Feklisov, Meet for Lunch

The next day a surprising ray of hope emerged. The KGB's Washington Chief, Aleksandr Feklisov also used the name Aleksandr Fomin. He believed neither Kennedy nor Khrushchev wanted to escalate the crisis to a full-fledged war. Fomin, also a journalist, approached an ABC television network reporter, John Scali, who had a known reputation for connections to the State Department and the Kennedy clan as he covered State Department news and even travelled with Secretary Rusk. Scali did his research on Fomin before the two met the first time.

Fomin invited Scali to lunch where a proposal of settlement was offered. The proposal said the Soviet Union would agree to remove missiles under UN supervision and inspection. The US would then lift the blockade and pledge not to invade Cuba. The KGB chief asked Scali to deliver the message immediately to the US government. It was unclear why the message to the US was transmitted in such an unconventional way. Though unorthodox in approach, ExComm knew it was not unusual for the Soviet Union.[1]

Scali revealed to Fomin that ExComm members were supporting a plan to invade Cuba. Fomin offered that the action against Cuba would certainly initiate action against West Berlin. Following the meeting with Fomin, Scali prepared a summary of the discussion and delivered it to his friend, Roger Hilsman, Director of Intelligence and Research at the State Department. US officials assumed Fomin's message came from the Kremlin and they considered it with the latest letter to Kennedy from Khrushchev. The memorandum said

the KGB chief had prompted Scali to ask if the crisis might be resolved with the three conditions offered earlier. Fomin added Valerian Zorin, Ambassador to the UN, would support Ambassador Stevenson to put forth the proposal to the General Assembly.

An official State Department car came to the ABC studio to drive Scali at 1930 to meet with Secretary Rusk. The secretary gave Scali authorisation to deliver a message to Fomin. The message said: 'I have reason to believe the USG (US Government) sees potential in the conditions and supposes the representatives of the two countries at the UN to work out details with U Thant.'

Scali met again with Fomin at 1930 in the coffee shop at the Statler Hilton Hotel. When the American journalist shared the information he received unofficially from Rusk, Fomin took the deal one step further and requested inspections by Soviet officials of US bases in Florida. Fomin assured Scali he would communicate the information immediately to the highest authorities.

At 2300, Robert Kennedy met with Anatoly Dobrynin at the Soviet Embassy, one of several meetings between the two men during the crisis. Dobrynin defended the deployment of Soviet missiles to Cuba as retaliation for the US placing Jupiter missiles in Turkey. Kennedy offered to discuss the missiles in Turkey in a potential settlement. He then left the office and called the President. Robert Kennedy returned to Dobrynin's office and reported the President was ready to favourably consider the Jupiter missiles. The Ambassador responded he would discuss this with his leadership in Moscow.

Another grand plan from Washington determined a US team would board the Liberty ship SS *Marucla.* Despite President Kennedy's letters and exchanges with Russian ambassadors, the *Marucla,* a Panamanian-owned freighter, registered in Lebanon, and under Soviet charter bound for Cuba from the port of Riga was first to be boarded. Destroyer Squadron 10 from Newport intercepted the *Marucla*, sighted in the early morning hours by two US destroyers, the USS *John Pierce* and the USS *Joseph P. Kennedy*.[2] The destroyer *Kennedy*'s boarding party was ordered not to disturb weapons in the whaleboat.[3] The boarding party included executive officers of the USS *Pierce,* Dwight Osborne, Kennedy Reynolds, Damage Control Officer Edward Mass, Communications Officer Paul Sanger, and Radioman Paul Arnold. The US boarding group offered candy bars as they came aboard the *Marucla*. By 0800 the *Marucla* had been boarded without incident and allowed to sail on.

The President increased low-level flights over Cuba from twice daily to once every two hours. Night flights photographed missile sites with bright flares dropped over the island. He then added petroleum oil and lubricants to the embargo list.

President Kennedy was involved in every aspect of the crisis. The State Department began preparations to establish a civil government in Cuba after the invasion. Cuban exiles living in Florida had been tapped to hit the ground running and set up a democratic organisation. President Kennedy asked for a list of Cuban doctors in the Miami area who could respond quickly. He supervised everything from assembly of ships to wording of the leaflets to be dropped over Cuba.

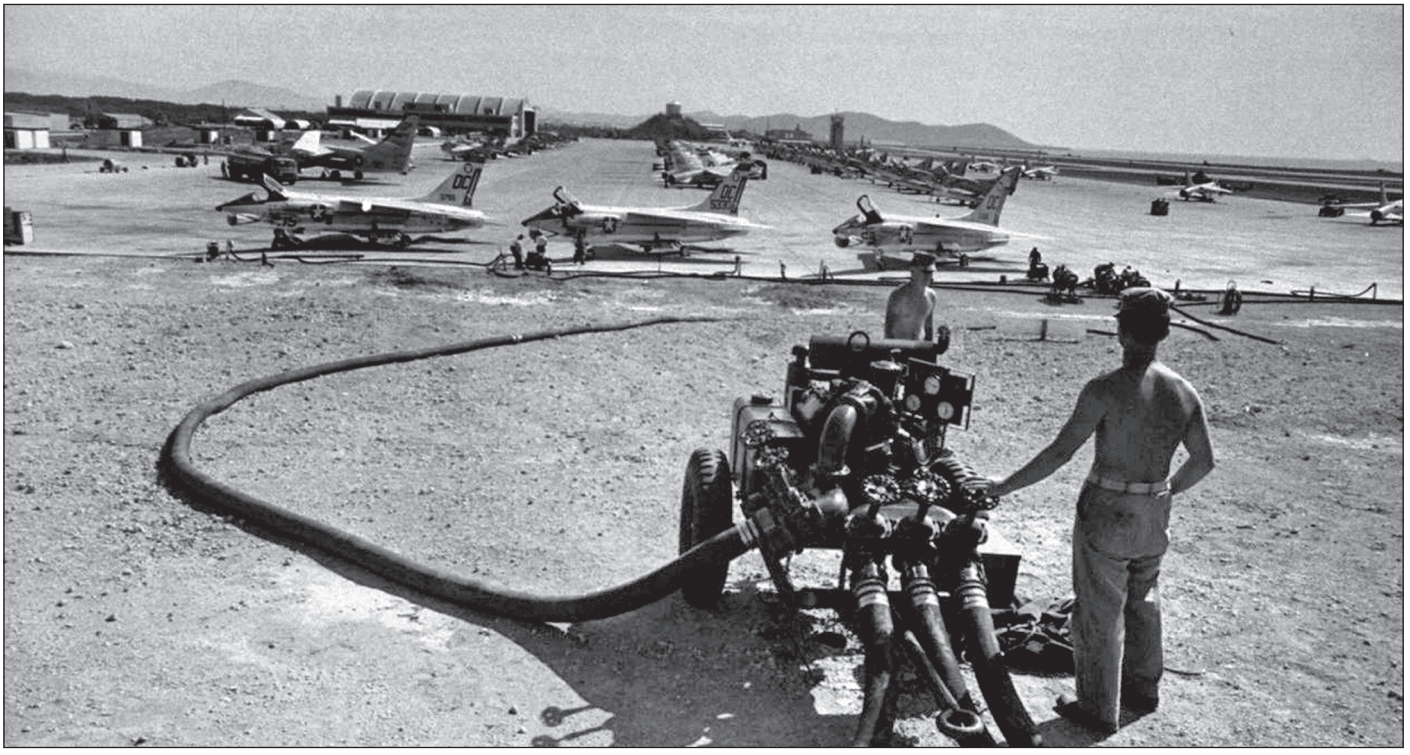
26 October 1962, The White House, Washington, DC

Premier Khrushchev sent a message to President Kennedy which proposed removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba if the US would withdraw ships in the blockade and agree not to invade Cuba.

26 October 1962, USS Blandy, 200 Miles Northeast of Caicos Passage

The *Blandy* was ordered to depart from the carrier *Essex* and the Hunter-Killer Group to investigate a submarine. A P-3 Orion from NAS Patuxent River searched for a submarine spotted earlier but lost contact. The Orion pilot was guided by air controllers on the *Essex.* The pilot, Lieutenant B.W. Bartlett, under orders from controllers, dropped passive sonobuoys and monitored signals to locate the submarine. The Orion had the ability to remain on station for up to 12 hours with two of the four propellers feathered.

Bartlett descended to 1,200 feet altitude and viewed the ocean on this clear day. Nothing was spotted for over 45 minutes of flying over



The Chance Vought F8U Crusaders seen in the foreground of this photograph were an important fighter aircraft in the US Navy inventory at the time of the Missile Crisis and the photoreconnaissance variant would conduct low-level missions over Cuba. (Albert Grandolini collection)

the area. Lieutenant Bartlett notified his communications contact to prepare a marker buoy and drop a pattern of 16 sonobuoys. The sonobuoy operator prepared frequency channels to monitor the buoy's responses.

Within two hours, the communications contact reported to Bartlett a possible submarine at zero four zero. A helicopter from the *Essex* was dispatched to assist in holding the submarine contact. ASW communications commander of Destroyer 24 onboard *Blandy* designated the contact as C18, possibly a Foxtrot-class submarine.[4]

Captain Kelley was energised and shouted, 'This time we're going to get ahold of the bastard till he has to pop up.'

At the same time, US surveillance aircraft tracked Soviet freighters, SS *Yuri Gagarin* and SS *Komiles,* within 20 miles of the submarine followed by Lieutenant Bartlett in his P-3 Orion. *Blandy* was ordered to shadow the freighters. Kelley became impatient and wanted to try to gain contact on the submarine with SQS-23 sonar. In Kelley's excitement, he yelled, 'Damn bird farm never bring that guy to heel.'

Kelley directed the OOD to change course to three four three at 25 knots. Disappointed with his orders he said, 'I'd rather go after the submarine contact that the *Essex* helos are still trying to gain. Without us, they'll probably lose the son of a bitch.'

26 October 1962, Friday Evening, USS Blandy, Near the Quarantine Line

Designated boarding parties once again assembled on deck with new orders. Two boiler tenders had set up gear for taking oil samples on the tanker. Machinist Mate Dubicki, a Czech-born Russian-speaking engineer was selected to join one of the boarding teams. The teams waited, fully geared up; the teams rotated every two hours. They waited and waited until after several more hours, *Blandy* was ordered to return to the *Essex* Hunter-Killer group which continued to monitor Submarine C18. It became clear to *Blandy's* crew the entire movement had been more about sending a message to the Soviet Union leaders than actually stopping ships.

The crew of the *Blandy* cheered loudly as they observed the submarine moving eastward. Most of the crew had been unaware that all three of the submarine's engines had experienced major issues and it would be unable to dive again.

27 October 1962, Saturday, Premier Khrushchev Writes to President Kennedy

Khrushchev learned early that day that his missiles in Cuba had not been bombed and no military action had occurred. He then determined to offer a new proposal. However, Khrushchev had been unaware of the cable from General Issa Pliyev in Cuba to Defence Minister Malinovsky. The cable reported that the Soviet commander anticipated an air strike in Cuba on 26 or 27 October and Pliyev intended to employ all means of defence at his disposal.

Malinovsky supported Pliyev's plan and cabled his authorisation at 1100. However, the final decision had to be approved by Khrushchev and the Presidium.

Saturday dawned with the arrival of a new formal communication from Khrushchev to Kennedy. Clearly Khrushchev did not personally write this letter and it was likely authored by someone in the Foreign Office inside the Kremlin. The wording was explicit and to the point: 'We will remove our missiles from Cuba, you will remove yours from Turkey. The Soviet Union will pledge not to invade or interfere with the internal affairs of Turkey; the US will make the same pledge regarding Cuba.'

As the President and the JCS debated action to take at this moment, the JCS still believed the blockade to be far too weak and an invasion was needed to get the Soviet's attention. During these new discussions, a message came that changed the course of events. A most difficult 24 hours followed for all members of ExComm. Secretary McNamara reported increased activity at all missile sites and the Il-28s in Cuba as well. Intelligence reports that morning indicated five missile sites in Cuba appeared to be fully operational. The FBI advised Robert Kennedy that recent intelligence showed Soviet personnel in New York preparing to destroy their diplomatic documents. During the past months, President Kennedy had asked the State Department to determine the details of removal of the obsolete Jupiter missiles in Turkey. US Polaris submarines in the Mediterranean were of far greater usefulness.

A US Navy P-3 Orion patrol aircraft passes a vessel at sea. (Albert Grandolini collection)

6

A NEW BALL GAME

Shootdown

27 October 1962, USAF Major Rudolph Anderson's Mission Over Cuba

> 'The main objective of taking Cuba away from Castro has been lost. We have been overly consumed with the missile problem.' – Director of the CIA, John McCone

Major I. Grechenov, Commander of the Anti-Aircraft Division, at the SA-2 site south of Banes, Cuba, read a report of a U-2 reconnaissance aircraft flying into Cuban airspace. Grechenov received the order to destroy the U-2. USAF Major Rudolph Anderson flew the U-2 14 miles above Cuba. Thirteen days earlier he had flown one of the first TOP SECRET reconnaissance missions over Cuba that confirmed the presence of Soviet missile sites. Anderson was not scheduled to fly that day, but he argued strongly for the flight when it was added to the schedule.

Mission 3127 had been Anderson's sixth flight over Cuba as part of Operation Brass Knob. Shortly after he entered Cuban air space, his plane appeared on Major I. Grechenov's radar as the Reconnaissance and Targeting Station locked on to Anderson's aircraft. When the commanding general, the only man authorised to order a surface-to-air missile launch was nowhere to be found, Grechenov gave the order, 'Destroy Target Number 33.' Seconds later the target was destroyed and the pilot killed.[1]

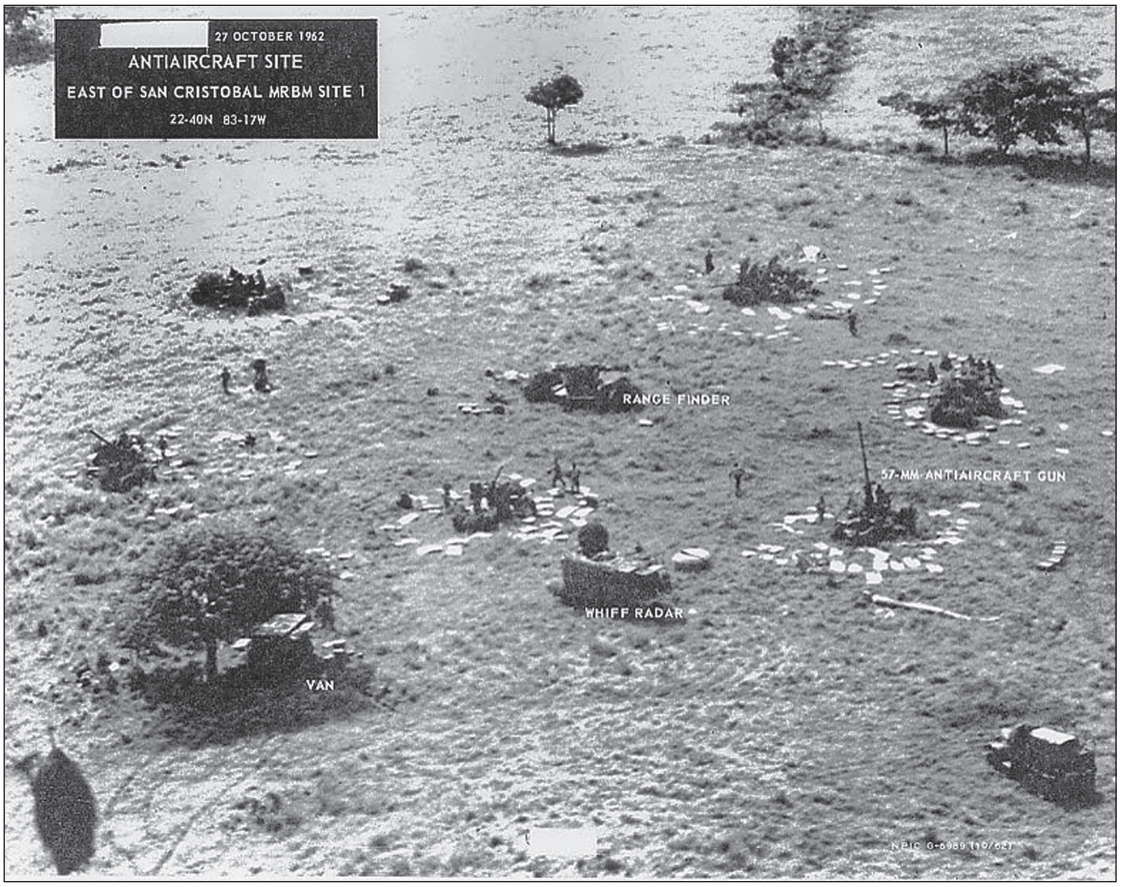
An urgent message brought to ExComm reported that the plane flown by Major Rudolph Anderson, Jr from South Carolina, had been shot down over Cuba and his aircraft destroyed by a surface-to-air missile and Anderson had died in the crash.[2] John Kennedy and the ExComm leaders understood the US had to take offensive military action to protect the Air Force U-2 pilots who continued to fly reconnaissance missions. The report to ExComm then changed the course of events. The President told the group, 'We are now in an entirely new ball game.'[3]

The partial wreckage of the U-2 shot down over Cuba on 27 October 1962. (Albert Grandolini collection)

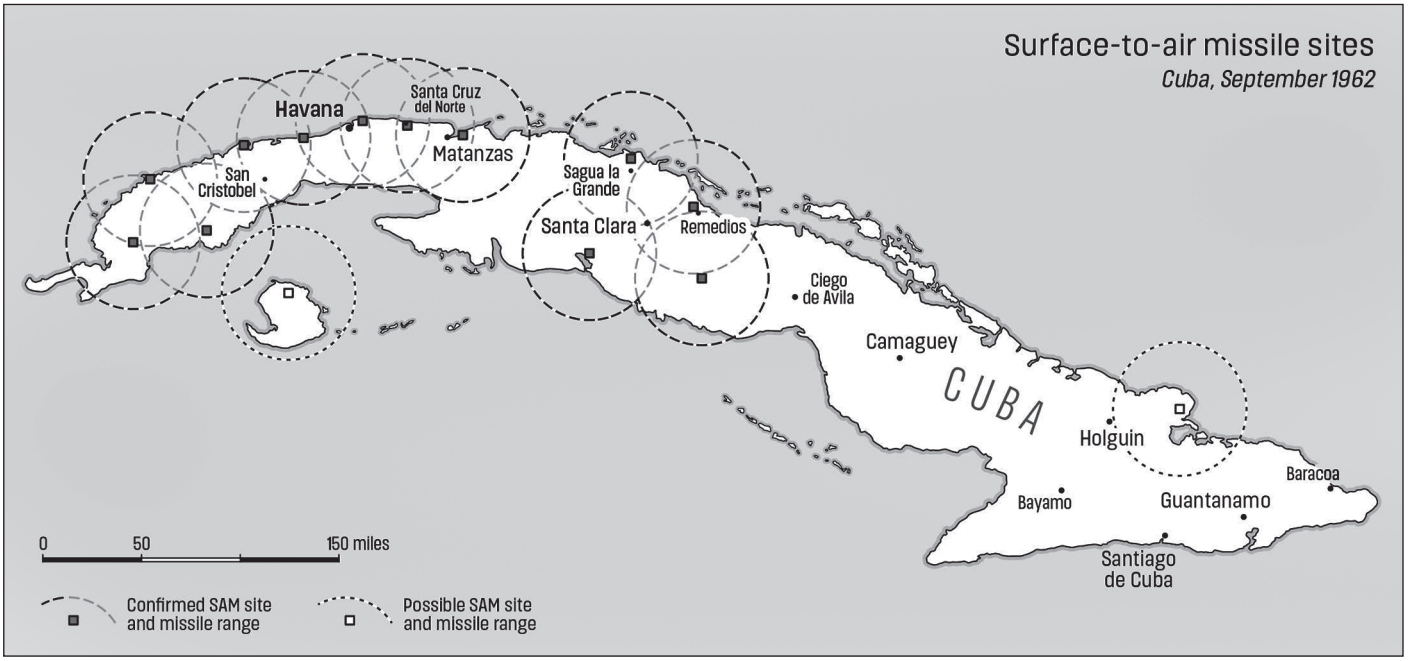
When ExComm was informed of the shootdown, they assumed the attack on the U-2 had been ordered by the Kremlin and designed to escalate the existing crisis. However, shortly after the incident, Marshal Malinovsky reprimanded Grechenov and ordered no other U-2s be attacked.

While the ExComm generals quickly demanded bombing attacks to destroy the SAM sites, President Kennedy spoke with a more calm and peaceful voice. He said, 'It isn't the first step that concerns me, but both sides escalating to the fourth and fifth step and we don't go to the sixth because there is no one around to do so.'

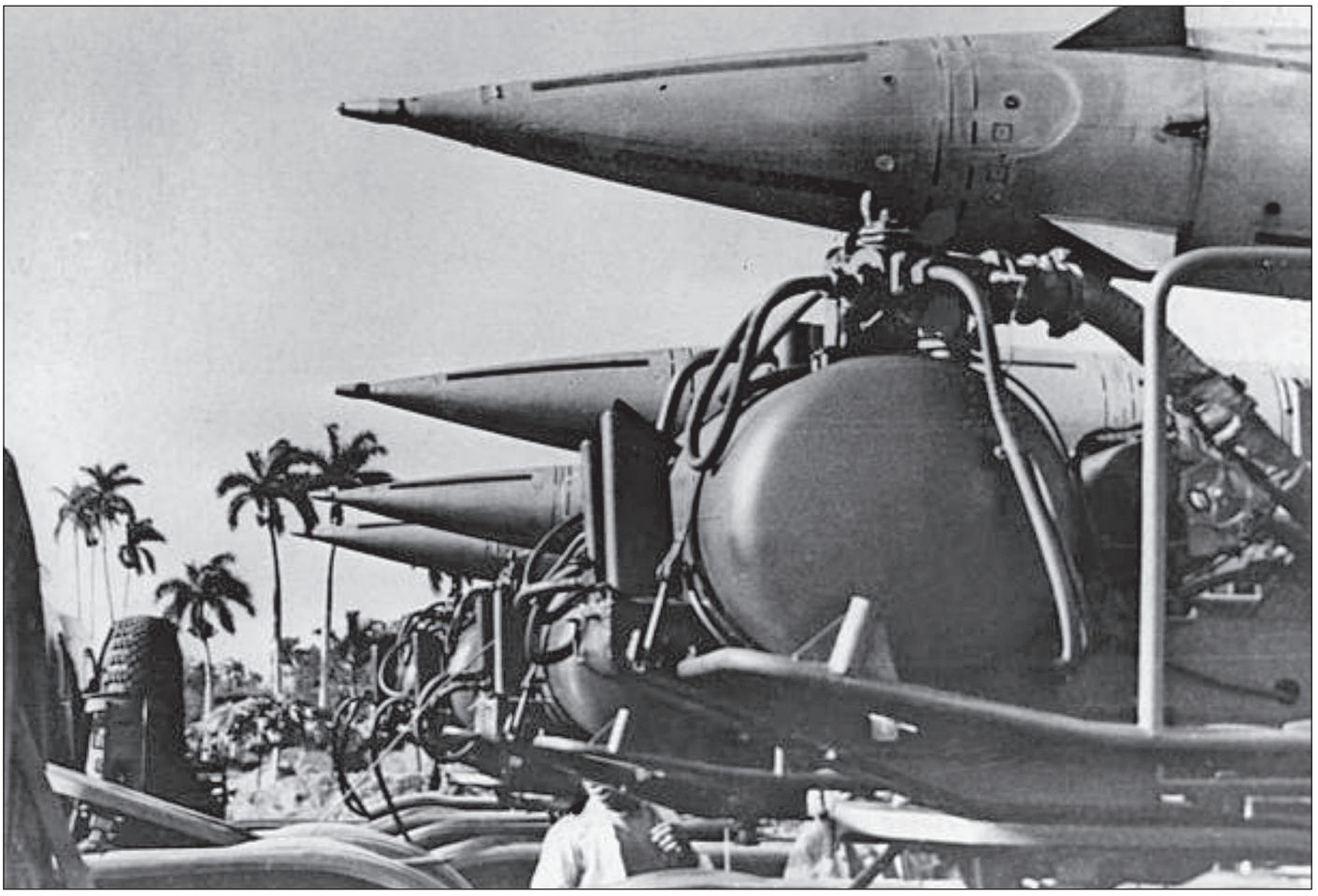
At 1600 on 27 October, General Taylor reported the JCS were now recommending an air strike be launched Monday morning, 29 October, followed by the ground invasion seven days later. The majority of civilian leaders agreed at that time. The President charged ExComm to prepare to disarm missiles with atomic warheads so that only he could approve a launch. He expressed concern for NATO partners and Turkey; a member of NATO, strongly opposed the removal of the missiles stationed there, as did other NATO countries. Kennedy stressed the US responsibility to consider the effects on other nations. US Ambassador to Turkey, Raymond Hare,



Antiaircraft site photographed east of San Cristobal on 27 October 1962. The photograph shows six S-60 57mm antiaircraft guns of Soviet origin, along with their supporting radars. Even in the age of surface-to-air missiles, such weapons could prove lethal to aircraft flying at low altitudes. (Albert Grandolini collection)



The deployment of (Soviet-operated) SA-2 SAM sites on Cuba as assessed by the US intelligence services, primarily through the use of data collected by Boeing RB-47H reconnaissance bombers of the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing during September 1962. (Map by Micky Hewitt)



Reload missiles for the SA-2 SAM sites stand at the ready on their trailers. (Albert Grandolini collection)

sent a message to Washington expressing his concern for the missile trade and the adverse effect on relations between the US and Turkey in addition to the negative view from the NATO members.

Later that afternoon, the President said, 'The US will not attack tomorrow, Sunday, 28 October.' ExComm discussed a draft letter to Khrushchev, but Robert Kennedy suggested a response to the offer made to John Scali. Arguments flew around the room with sharp disagreements. All were exhausted and tense; however, John Kennedy had remained calmest of all. At this point the President asked his brother and Ted Sorensen to draft an alternative response. After 45 minutes, they presented the reply to Khrushchev's earlier offer.

> Dear Mr. Chairman,
> I have read your letter of 26 October with great care and welcomed the statement of your desire to seek a prompt solution to the problem. The first thing that needs to be done; however, is for work to cease on offensive missile bases in Cuba and for all weapons systems in Cuba capable of offensive use to be rendered inoperable, and to make effective UN arrangements.
>
> We would agree … to remove promptly the quarantine now in effect and to give assurances against an invasion of Cuba. If you will give your representative similar instructions, there is no reason why we should not be able to complete these arrangements and announce them to the world within a couple of days.

John Kennedy ordered ExComm's members to return to The White House at 2100 for a most urgent meeting. He talked about Major Anderson, whose death had hit him hard. He said, 'Politicians and officials made decisions, dined with their families while the brave and the young die.' A thought that greatly disturbed him was the possible death of the children throughout the world who had no role in this confrontation. His own daughter, Caroline, then only five years old, had at times come in and out of the Oval Office. The President wanted to ensure he had done everything conceivable to prevent a worldwide catastrophe. His concern had been strongly thoughtful of the young people: 'If the US erred, we made a decision for many people who had not been given any opportunity to speak for themselves.'

While the hours ticked by, the President asked his brother, Robert, to meet with Ambassador Dobrynin at the Department of Justice to advise him that the US was aware that the work on missile bases in Cuba had been continued and even expedited. A most serious issue was that one of the US reconnaissance planes flying over Cuba had been shot down and the pilot killed. The Attorney General reported the President's letter to Khrushchev being transmitted at that moment and he considered the destruction of one of the U-2 aircraft a very serious turn of events. Robert Kennedy expressed the President's sentiment 'to have peaceful relations between our two countries.' The Attorney General was firm in telling the ambassador, 'We need an answer immediately, not later than tomorrow.'

27 October 1962, Washington, DC

> 'In foreign affairs brains, preparation, judgment, and power are of utmost importance, but luck is essential.' – Former Secretary of State, Dean Acheson

The White House received a report at 1025 that 20 Soviet ships had turned about and headed away from the quarantine line.

The President asked Dean Rusk to contact former UN official, Andrew Cordier, and provide him with a statement calling for the removal of Jupiter missiles in Turkey and Soviet missiles in Cuba. Rusk instructed Cordier if he received further information, he would ask UN Secretary-General U Thant to issue a statement in order for the President to be in agreement with the UN. At this point in the crisis, Kennedy was reluctant to allow obsolete missiles in Turkey to stand in the way of a settlement to avert a nuclear war.

Soviet Subs Ordered Home

27 October 1962, Premier Nikita Khrushchev, Moscow, Soviet Union

Khrushchev and the leaders in Moscow sent orders to their ships to return home; however, four submarines that sailed toward Cuba across the Atlantic Ocean were only three days out. The leading submarine was near to entering the Caribbean Sea. Head of the Soviet Navy, Admiral Sergei Gorshkov presented the leaders with the best plan, a direct route from the Atlantic passing through a chain of islands from the Bahamas to the Turks and Caicos. The widest route was only 40 miles. Gorshkov presented leaders with maps that detailed the submarines' locations and the island passage. He was aware that the US controlled the passage with detection equipment. To sail through the islands would be risky, but to circumnavigate the islands added two days to the journey. All leaders then agreed to add the two or even three days to avoid confrontation with the US.

27 October 1962, Captain Vitali Savitsky Aboard B-59

Three hundred and eighty miles southeast of Bermuda, in the North Atlantic, was Hunter-Killer Group Alpha based on the aircraft carrier USS *Randolph* (CVS-15). Destroyer escorts USS *Bache, Beale, Cony, Eaton* and *Murray* fell in behind the carrier. *Randolph* re-established sonar contact on target C19 – Savitsky's submarine – inside the quarantine line.

Savitsky had been directed by Moscow to terminate the voyage to Cuba. He was to patrol the Sargasso Sea, east of Dubviko's B-36 and north of Shumkov's B-130. The USS *Randolph* and its Hunter-Killer Group had been Savitsky's first contact with the US ships. The Hunter-Killer Group tracked B-59 with sonar from destroyers, S-2F Tracker aircraft and Sea King helos. Savitsky felt trapped. The USS *Cony* dropped depth charges over the submarine which shook the crew. The destroyer dropped the grenades five at a time. After 16 hours, the Soviet submarine was forced to surface to recharge batteries. Chief of Staff Arkhipov was angered with Savitsky, but they could do nothing else.

27 October 1962, USS Cony (DDE-508)

When B-59 surfaced to charge its batteries, the *Cony* flashed its lights at the submarine.

Cony: What ship?
Savitsky: Ship X.
Cony: What is your status?
Savitsky: On the surface operating normally.
Cony: Do you need assistance?
Savitsky: No, thank you.

The next morning, B-59 signalled the *Cony* and asked for bread and cigarettes. The destroyer moved alongside the surfaced B-59 and set up a line for transfer. Following the transfer of the bread and cigarettes, the *Cony* continued to cruise parallel to B-59 for several more hours.

27-28 October 1962, Captain Savitsky, Aboard B-59

Lieutenant Orlov, Radio Intercept Officer onboard B-59, listened to the messages for two days. When their submarine surfaced, they realised it was not at war. Savitsky raised the USSR national colours which seemed unnecessary because the Americans obviously already knew their identity.

The crew of B-59 observed the Americans on the nearby destroyer. Crewmen on the deck of the destroyer took photos of the Soviet submarine. They waved at B-59's crew and received good natured responses. The Russian sailors watched with interest as a jazz band on deck of the destroyer played songs to the enjoyment of the submarine crew. The next evening after B-59 was fully charged, the submarine dived and moved away from the destroyers with no further signal contact.

As B-59 moved out toward the northeast, Captain Aleksei Dubivko of B-36 was pursued by another destroyer.

28 October 1962, Commander Charles P. Rozier, USS Charles P. Cecil, (DD-835) 400 miles north of San Juan, Puerto Rico

The *Cecil,* part of the USS *Enterprise* task group, headed south to a radar station of Cuba. The OOD, Lieutenant John Hunter, observed a radar contact blip on the screen. Seven thousand yards away from the contact, the OOD and JOOD, were convinced they had a Soviet submarine. In a stroke of bad luck, Hunter's sonar at that moment went out of commission. Within a short time, the sonarmen had the equipment restored but there was no other sighting.

28 October 1962, 0900, Premier Nikita Khrushchev, Moscow, Soviet Union

Khrushchev's message to Kennedy was broadcast from Moscow.

> In order to complete with greater speed the liquidation of the conflict dangerous to the cause of peace, the Soviet government, in addition to previously issued instructions on the cessation of further work at building sites for the weapons, has issued a new order for dismantling of the weapons which you describe as "offensive" and their crating and return to the Soviet Union.

When the news reached President Kennedy, he released a statement hailing Khrushchev's decision and calling it 'an important contribution to peace.'

Nearing the End

28 October 1962, Sunday, 1000, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Washington, DC

Secretary Rusk called Robert Kennedy to report receipt of a message from the Russians. They had agreed to withdraw their missiles from Cuba.

At 1100 Ambassador Dobrynin requested a meeting with Robert Kennedy. Dobrynin confirmed a message enroute from Khrushchev

which agreed to dismantle and withdraw missiles in Cuba with supervision and inspection by UN representatives. The Premier's message closed by saying that he sent his best wishes to the President and Robert Kennedy. The President's brother then called former presidents Truman and Eisenhower to convey the latest news.

The President and his brother met in the Oval Office and expressed gratitude for the successful end of the crisis. As the President sat at the nineteenth century *Resolute* desk,[4] he composed a letter to Mrs Anderson.

The USS *Willard Keith* (DD-775) of the Allen M. Sumner-class. *Willard Keith* saw service at the end of the Second World War and during this time was rumoured to be involved in a mysterious incident in which an object was depth-charged and destroyed though no official record was made of this. DD-775 was one of many US Navy vessels of this vintage, modified and upgraded to varying degrees, to take part in the quarantine of Cuba. The vessel would end its days in service with the Columbian navy. (Albert Grandolini collection)

7

CAT AND MOUSE IN THE CARIBBEAN

Hunter and Hunted

29 October 1962, Captain Aleksei Dubviko, B-36, 300 miles south-east of Bermuda

Until the evening of 29 October, B-36's crew and officers had avoided detection of their submarine. Dubivko's crew suffered terribly with the heat inside the vessel at 65 degrees centigrade (149 degrees Fahrenheit) and hotter still in the engine room.

When Dubivko heard US radio news reporting all Soviet merchant ships had been ordered to reverse course and turn toward home, his submarine was at snorkel depth to recharge batteries. The commander allowed as many of the crew as the bridge cockpit could accommodate to get fresh air for a brief period. Dubivko knew about the US underwater passive hydrophones known as the SOSUS system, however, he did not know much of their accuracy.

Suddenly Lieutenant Zhukov shouted, 'Hydrophone effects, starboard bow bearing zero four five, probably surface ships, high speed, closing.'

Dubivko ordered, 'Emergency dive.' He dived down the trunk and a seaman immediately slammed the hatch shut.[1] The surface

search radar was not activated for fear of detection. The captain heard a high-speed surface ship, probably a destroyer, maybe it was even Shumkov in B-130.

29 October 1962, Commander Charles P. Rozier, USS Charles P. Cecil (DD-835) 400 miles north of San Juan, Puerto Rico

The *Cecil* regained and held sonar contact after the submarine's evasive manoeuvres. The isothermal layer prevented the submarine from hiding below.[2] With Rozier's expertise as a submariner, his craft managed to hold contact.

Rozier had respect for the Soviet submarine's commander who now appeared to be effectively losing his vessel in *Cecil*'s wake. After sitting dead in the water, the submarine surged directly toward the *Cecil* at five knots. Rozier circled the *Cecil* and kicked his engines ahead when the range had decreased to 500 yards. The *Cecil* went to 15 knots and turned toward the submarine to prevent it from entering the destroyer's baffles.[3]

An hour after making contact, ASW Air Controller John Hunter heard two aircraft over the ASW network. He called and they identified themselves as P-2 Neptune ASW aircraft from Patrol Squadron 56 NAS Jacksonville, Florida. One of the P-2s responded and flew on a bearing provided by *Cecil* and the aircraft quickly arrived overhead.

As a trained ASW air controller, Hunter had a headset with a circuit to send calls to and receive calls from the pilot. Through another headset he communicated with the Combat Center. The pilot shouted as his instruments confirmed the presence of the submarine. The contact was designated by Command Center as C20.

The pilot of the Tracker shouted, 'Madman! Madman!' which meant his instruments read a fluctuation in the earth's magnetic field from the submarine.[4] They had the confirmation they needed, they held a submarine.

Rozier's crew spotted the USS *Sellers* (DDG-11), a new Adams-class guided missile destroyer on the surface approaching.

29 October 1962, Tuesday, 0300, Captain Nikolai Shumkov, B-130, Northeast of Caicos Passage

Conditions aboard B-130 worsened. Temperatures had reached 65 centigrade (149 degrees Fahrenheit) in the engine area. Personal hygiene onboard had become critical, and many of the crew suffered with a painful rash. In the darkness, they had tried to surface to charge batteries. The two main diesel engines were totally out of operation. The chief mechanic worked tirelessly to use spare parts from the malfunctioning diesels to keep one up and running. While the captain stood on the navigation bridge, within seconds a light from an aircraft flashed over them. Shumkov shouted as he dived for the ladder, 'He's got us. Get below now. We're making an emergency dive. Emergency dive. Clear the bridge.'

The sonar operator calmly reported, 'Central Command, hydrophone effects broad on the starboard beam, surface contact, probable destroyer.'

'Twin screws, definite destroyer.'

'Too slow, get us down now!' Shumkov ordered.

Everyone could easily hear the thrashing of the propellers overhead. The destroyer came on quickly, maybe the submarine had not been spotted.

Shumkov felt intense pressure. Could they be at war? There were no transmissions from fleet broadcast.

The executive officer responded, 'He's going to hit. We are not deep enough.' The propellers were almost directly overhead.

Shumkov accepted their fate as the fault of being forced to operate in a near vacuum. For submariners to operate in such conditions was intolerable. Inside the Command Center, Shumkov had spotted a Russian Orthodox postcard with a picture of Saint Nicholas, patron saint of sailors, on which was printed the quote, 'Submarine life is not a service but a religion.' Surprising, he thought, the political officer had not spotted and removed it. Shumkov silently hoped the card remained there, and it did for the remainder of the voyage.

Sonar announced the destroyer had circled back, but the submarine still had not been tagged. 'Hold at 120 metres depth. Total silence,' Shumkov ordered in his strong voice.

Hammering out the Details

29 October 1962, The White House, Washington, DC, the Kremlin, Moscow, Soviet Union

Both countries held a magnifying glass to the proposed agreement to ensure they received exactly what they expected. Ambassador Dobrynin met with Robert Kennedy to share an unsigned copy of the letter from Khrushchev which detailed the terms of the agreement and included the removal of the Jupiter missiles in Turkey. After studying the letter, Robert Kennedy met again with Dobrynin and rejected the proposed inclusion of the Jupiter missiles in Turkey.

ExComm analysed the proposed agreement and recommended in addition to removal of the MRBMs and IRBMs, the Il-28 bombers should also be included. Although the conflict highlighted the deployment of Soviet missiles, the US argued that the bombers were also 'offensive,' as indicated in the quarantine proclamation stated.

30 October 1962, Tuesday, 1500, UN Secretary-General U Thant Arrives in Havana, Cuba

Upon his arrival in Havana, U Thant and his officers met with Fidel Castro, Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos and Foreign Minister Raul Roa. U Thant presented proposals for the verification of dismantling of the missiles, inspections by a UN team, aerial reconnaissance by UN aircraft and verification by the International Committee of the Red Cross. After another of Fidel's rants, he rejected each proposal stating they 'humiliated the Cuban State.'

Premier Khrushchev sent President Kennedy a 16-page letter which covered not only the present crisis, but also the naval quarantine, nuclear test-ban treaty and the situation in Berlin. The letter requested lifting the quarantine and economic blockade immediately, as well as shutting down the US naval base at Guantánamo Bay. Khrushchev wanted to discuss Berlin without including German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer.

Robert Kennedy met again with Dobrynin to discuss the letter that the ambassador brought to Kennedy the day before. Kennedy had prepared notes to discuss at the meeting: 'No quid pro quo as I told you. The letter appears there was. You asked about the missile bases in Turkey, and I told you we would be out in four or five months. That still holds and you have my word on it. If you publish any document indicating a deal then it is off, and if done afterward will further affect the relationship.'

Based on the letters between Kennedy and Khrushchev, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko advised US Ambassador Foy Kohler that the Soviet Union wished to reach an agreement.

The CIA's Operation Mongoose and Task Force W were immediately halted. Edward Lansdale was sent to Miami to oversee the end of Mongoose. On his own authority, William Harvey – Director of Task Force W – ordered teams of covert agents to Cuba to support any US operation that might occur. One of the operatives

sent a message to Robert Kennedy who directed CIA Director McCone to terminate the operation immediately.

Soviet Submarines meet US Ships in the Caribbean

> 'Mere chance, and prudence of the brigade's Chief of Staff Vasily Arkipov, who happened to be onboard, prevented the nuclear combat operations.' – Captain Ryurik Ketov

The aircraft carrier USS *Randolph* and 11 US Navy destroyers found the B-59 approaching Cuba. US Navy vessels began dropping depth charges to force B-59 to surface for identification. The Soviet submarines had had no contact from Moscow for several days, and B-59 had been monitoring US radio messages. It was still difficult to ascertain if war had been declared, but Captain Savitsky concluded that they were definitely at war with the US. He made plans to launch one of his nuclear torpedoes.

Onboard B-59, three officers had to agree unanimously to authorise the launch of a nuclear weapon. The officers onboard B-59 who held that authority were Captain Savitsky, Political Officer Ivan Moslennikov and Chief of Staff Vasily Arkhipov who was also Executive Officer of the submarine. Traditionally, to launch a nuclear weapon only required the captain to secure authorisation from the political officer. Savitsky and Maslennikov each had a key that when fitted together in the Ignition Box would begin the launch process. Because of Arkhipov's position as Chief of Staff, Savitsky also had to secure his approval to launch a weapon. Arkhipov did not agree. A strong argument between Savitsky and Arkhipov broke out in the navigation room with Arkhipov refusing to agree to the launch. Arkhipov firmly argued, 'We shall wait for orders from Moscow.' Without Arkhipov's concurrence, Savitsky could not launch the nuclear weapon. If they were not at war, surely the torpedo launch would start one. Arkhipov's courageous performance onboard K-19 in the previous year sealed his reputation as a dedicated officer. He prevailed and convinced Savitsky to surface and await orders from Moscow. The submarine's batteries had run critically low and the air conditioning had totally failed. The extreme heat and high level of carbon dioxide inside the submarine forced Savitsky to order the submarine to surface amid the US Navy vessels. The captain then ordered B-59 to set sail for home port.[5] Likely Arkhipov's experience aboard K-19 played a role in his intervention to reject use of the nuclear weapons. He had seen first-hand how the crew of K-19 had suffered from radiation, and it was a vivid memory. Arkhipov's persuasion of Savitsky was a pivotal moment that represented maturity and excellent judgement in difficult circumstances. He saved not only himself and B-59's crew, but also thousands of US military personnel and civilians who would have perished in the nuclear exchange.

30 October 1962, USAF Captain Charles Maultsby, Accidentally Overflies the USSR

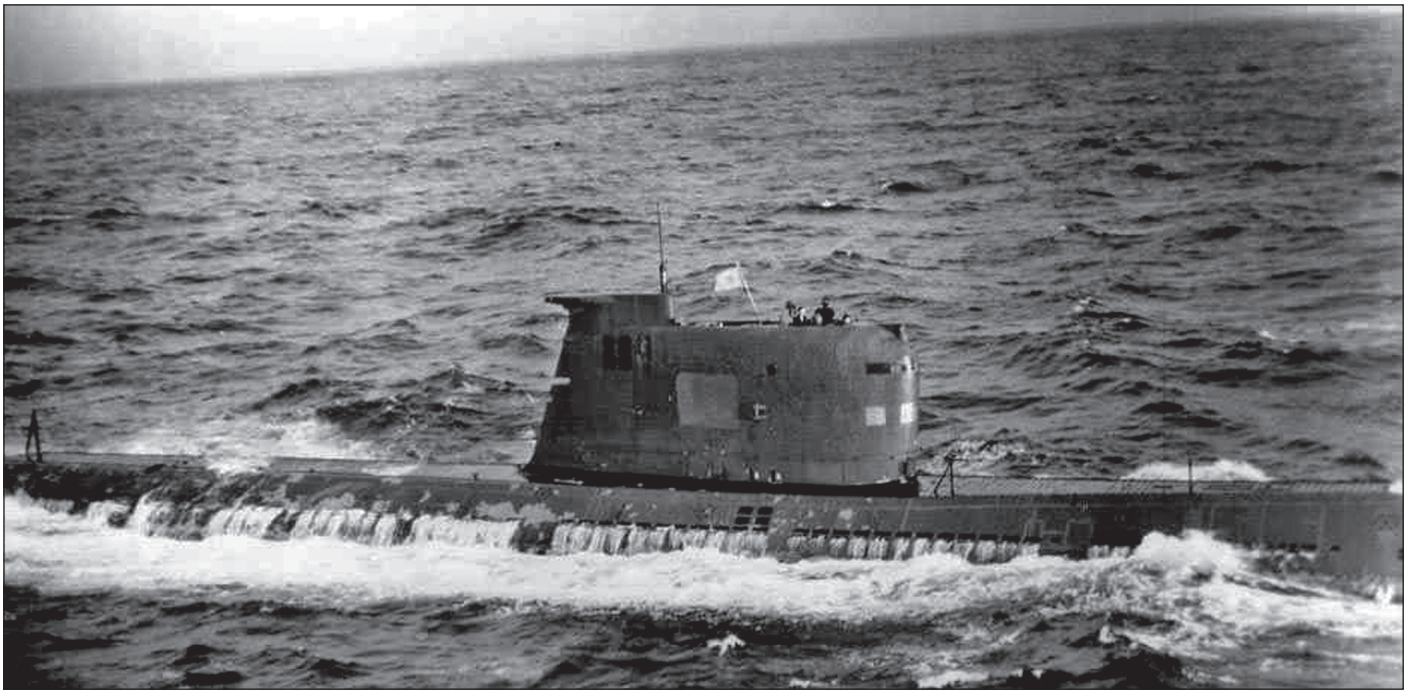
While The White House and ExComm tension heightened, JCS reported another U-2 aircraft incident had occurred. A U-2 on a flight out of Alaska had accidentally overflown the Soviet Union and MiG fighters had been scrambled in pursuit. The pilot of this U-2 had made it safely back to Alaska.

30 October 1962, Tuesday, 0300, Captain Edward G. Kelley, USS Blandy, Northeast of Caicos Passage

The *Blandy's* SQS-23 sonar worked well in the area. Sonarman Brad Sherman classified a contact as a possible Soviet Foxtrot-class long-range diesel submarine. The task group commander told the bridge officer that the SS *Yuri Gagarin* was five miles east and SS *Komiles* five miles west.

A call came from Commander Atlantic Fleet whose call sign, Top Hand, was easily recognised. Captain Kelley took the call from Admiral Robert Denison. Kelley had to shout to be heard over the bedlam in the pilothouse. Inside the voice of the sonarman blasted, 'Bridge, Sonar. We have sonar contact, bearing three four five.'

Kelley moved to look at the ASW attack director. 'Tell sonar I want an evaluation now!' All attention focused on the USS *Essex* Hunter-Killer group. Operations order directed the *Blandy* to signal the submarine to surface and identify herself.



The sail of the Soviet Foxtrot-class submarine B-59 seen after the vessel was forced to the surface. Unlike the other Soviet submarines, B-59 wore no mission number on its sail during its voyage across the Atlantic. (US Navy Photo)

US destroyer USS *Vesole* (DD-878) of the Gearing-class. *Versole* was built at the end of the Second World War. Post-war it saw service with the US Sixth Fleet, alternating between deployments to the Mediterranean, and the US east coast and Caribbean, and would take part in the quarantine of Cuba. (Albert Grandolini collection)

Commodore Morrison had quietly joined on the high command voice radio net. 'Holding sonar contact on a possible Soviet sub. Possible Foxtrot class.' The alert sounded immediately followed by hundreds of feet running to their stations in battle gear. Hedgehog anti-submarine weapons were loaded on to their launchers.

30 October 1962, Tuesday, 0330, Captain Nikolai Shumkov, B-130, Northeast of Caicos Passage

As Shumkov stood in Central Command, he heard the sonar above. The captain heard, 'They have P-3 Orion and Trackers and a Sea King helicopter.'

'Identify the destroyers working with those aircraft. They must belong to the *Essex* group.'

'Aye, Comrade Commander, they are *Blandy* and *Sperry* from Destroyer Squadron 24 with the *Essex*.'

'We have to surface to recharge in a half hour.'

30 October 1962, Tuesday, 0345, Captain Edward G. Kelley, USS Blandy, Northeast of the Caicos Passage

Blandy and the other US destroyers in the group kept a watch on the submarine. Every 15 minutes the S-2F Tracker from the *Essex* passed over the Russian submarine confirming its presence.

Tension on the bridge was high. Crewmembers remained at their posts and ate sea rations. They rotated positions only to go to the head.[6]

Blandy observed the submarine appeared dead in the water. A voice over the communications line called, 'Bridge, sonar, sounds like a torpedo.'

Kelley responded, 'Right full rudder, all ahead flank, prepare to fire port and starboard Hedgehogs. I need a range and bearing to the contact [submarine]. Bring out starboard torpedo launchers. Sonar, what's going on?'[7]

Sonar responded, 'Sir, it's not a torpedo. It's a false target.'

Blandy continued at flank speed. The submarine might still interpret *Blandy's* manoeuvre as break away after firing a weapon. The boat captain might be trustful of the destroyer commander and understand what was going on.

In the late evening with the last of the sun shining on the sea, the submarine slowly came to the surface like a black dragon. A misunderstood statement from the Watch Officer almost caused a disaster. The officer said, 'Looks like the ship should prepare for action starboard.' The statement overheard on the gunnery circuit by a gun captain who took control of the five-inch gun from the weapons officer. He crewman momentarily targeted the submarine

before the bridge realised the mistake and quickly corrected the situation.

30 October 1962, Tuesday, 0345, Captain Nikolai Shumkov, B-130

Captain Shumkov reviewed the identification book with the navigator and spotted the Forrest Sherman-class destroyer with number 943 boldly painted on its bow. He felt extreme anger; he was responsible for a Foxtrot submarine with a nuclear-tipped torpedo. His orders did not address how he should deal with the US destroyers.

30 October 1962, Tuesday, 0400, Captain Dubivko, B-36, 400 miles north of San Juan, Puerto Rico

Slowly Dubivko raised his vessel to periscope depth. The destroyer continued to circle as the aircraft flew overhead. The sonar operator reported a new contact matching B-36. Dubivko wondered if it could be a US submarine.

The operator announced, 'Comrade Commander, the new contact may be Shumkov in B-130. Their patrol area is west of B-36. If they are on the eastern edge and we are on the western edge of ours, maybe it is B-130.'

Dubivko considered his situation. Darkness approached, but he thought war had not started. B-36 went up to periscope depth and Dubivko raced up to the navigation desk. Through his own periscope, he observed three destroyers without lights and a helo flying low over the surface. He needed to recharge batteries on the surface, but it would be risky now. The navigator reported a destroyer towing 'a variable depth sonar.'[8] The towed line from the destroyer USS *Zellers* (DD-777) could be an issue if it came closer. The line would be a disaster if engaged with the submarine's propeller.

Dubivko ordered his submarine on a course due east, a warning signal broadcast reportedly over their scheduled communication times. He did not know who sent the messages, but someone was eager for them to receive it. B-36 had no way to know the messages were sent by their squadron commander, Kontr Admiral Leonid Rybalko.

At zero nine zero, B-36 came slowly to the surface to begin charging. The commander climbed the ladder and spotted three surface contacts, two departing the area at high speed.

30 October 1962, Tuesday, 1630, Captain Edward G. Kelley, USS Blandy (DD-943)

The crew of the *Blandy* cheered loudly as they observed the submarine moving eastward. Most of the crew had been unaware that all three of the submarine's engines had experienced major issues and would be unable to dive again.

30 October 1962, Tuesday, 1830, Captain Nikolai Shumkov, B-130

When B-130 reached the surface, Shumkov rushed up the ladder and threw open the main hatch. He bolted through the opening followed by two other officers. The clear blue sky appeared through the open hatch and the captain blinked a couple of times at the beautiful sunset. He inhaled a deep breath of clear air. Earlier, Shumkov considered he might not see another one. As he pivoted in the cockpit, he spotted the destroyer with the forward gun mount pointed in his direction. The submarine was on a heading east, the course prescribed by the US Notice to Mariners received two hours earlier. As the submarine tuned onto the destroyer's bearing, Shumkov saw the gun mounts swing away from its target on the submarine. Shumkov called instructions for the new course. The destroyer sent a light signal to the submarine: Do you need assistance?

The Comm Officer translated the message and asked if there was a response. Before the captain gave his response, he asked for the national flag to be brought forward. It appeared they might be facing a war. Shumkov laughed and replied, 'Yes. A couple of diesel engines, a ton of fresh water and a load of fresh vegetables.'

31 October 1962, Wednesday, Commander Charles Rozier, USS Charles P. Cecil

'Russian submarine on the surface. Russian submarine on the surface.' This alarm was shouted over the IMC loudspeaker. Lieutenant Hunter thought to himself, 'What a beautiful sight. Numbers on the starboard read 911 and 011 on the port side.'

31 October 1962, Wednesday, Captain Alexei Dubivko, B-36

As the captain stood on the bridge cockpit, he remembered they had been ordered to display the Soviet national flag instead of their naval flag. He figured the Americans already knew the naval flag, but he complied with orders.

Dubivko observed the *Cecil's* flag signal that caused some confusion. Lieutenant Zhukov found the international flag codebook. The destroyer then signalled the submarine with its large signal light. Zhukov interpreted the Americans' signals. He reported to Dubivko, 'Sir, they asked, "Do you need assistance?"'

Dubivko felt shock and surprise, 'Why would the Americans ask such a question if they will then blow us out of the water?' The *Cecil* identified the destroyer by light signals.

'US warship *Cecil*.'

The submarine captain thought how interesting the destroyer introduced itself.

The Soviet submarine B-130 photographed while moving on the surface. B-130 carries the tactical number 945 on its sail: unlike vessels of most other navies, Soviet vessels would carry a number only for the duration of a single mission. (Albert Grandolini collection)

Dubivko ordered a reply sent to the destroyer, 'No assistance required.' Then the submarine began to charge its batteries under the watchful gaze of the *Cecil*.

31 October 1962, Commander Charles Rozier, USS Charles P. Cecil

Commander Rozier remained at 1,500yards from the submarine and signalled: 'Can I be of assistance?'

After two days on the surface, the submarine descended with full batteries. *Cecil* left the area and regrouped with a carrier group. An officer who spoke Russian came onboard and assisted in counting Soviet missiles on freighters sailing away from Cuba.

31 October, Wednesday, Captain Alexei Dubivko, B-36

When B-36 descended back to the depths of the sea, it returned to the assigned patrol area. However, no sooner there, it detected the presence of the aircraft carrier, *Randolph.* Left without the choice, its commander slowed down and left his boat drift away towards the northeast, until the vessel was about 120 miles (193 kilometres) from the *Randolph*.

Suddenly a foreign sound echoed through the submarine. Shumkov turned quickly to the gauges and the Damage Control Officer (DCO).

'What the hell is that?'

The DCO reported, 'Engine room reports flooding under number two shaft, saltwater coming in, unsure from where.'

Shumkov called the chief mechanic. The conversation was short. 'Sir, forward torpedo room requests permission to arm one and two torpedoes to run pre-firing check.'

'Permission denied. We are not at war. Still just tracking.'

Shumkov recalled his orders as he had prepared for departure from Sayda Bay:

1. In the event you are attacked and with depth bombs and the pressure hull is ruptured, you are authorised to fire,
2. If you surface and are taken under fire and hit,
3. Upon orders from Moscow.

The chief mechanic called, 'Sir, Comrade Commander, the main gear is cracked and not driving the cooling pumps. When we surface, it will overheat. Request permission to remove it from operation.'

Shumkov listened and approved the chief mechanic's request. As he finished his conversation, three loud explosions ripped through the vessel. He ordered, 'Rig for depth charges.'

'Sonar, where is the Tracker?'

'Sir, these are not depth charges; they are hand grenades. It's a signal, not an attack.'

Shumkov questioned, 'These are depth bombs?'

'No sir, they are not.'

'We'll just sit tight then.'

Propellers could be heard overhead. More charges blasted one by one. Shumkov called for the DCO. 'What is the oxygen level in all compartments? Show me when you have the numbers.'

All areas reported below normal oxygen levels. Shumkov knew the situation to be critical; they would last barely another half hour. He worried about the carbon dioxide level too. In addition, if even a small drop of oil touched the tank, the result would be a catastrophic explosion.

Another issue arose when the navigator reported, 'Sir, we are receiving an unscheduled low frequency broadcast. The scheduled one is not due for two more hours. This is an operational signal telling us to avoid contact.'

'What else can happen now?' Shumkov considered.

The navigator continued, 'They are sending us a US Notice to Mariners about using harmless grenades to signal submarines to surface. Then we are supposed to surface or go on an easterly heading to show we understand.'

The captain ordered, 'Give me that message. We are not surfacing until we have to.'

Brigade Commander Agafonov had not even contacted Shumkov in over a week.

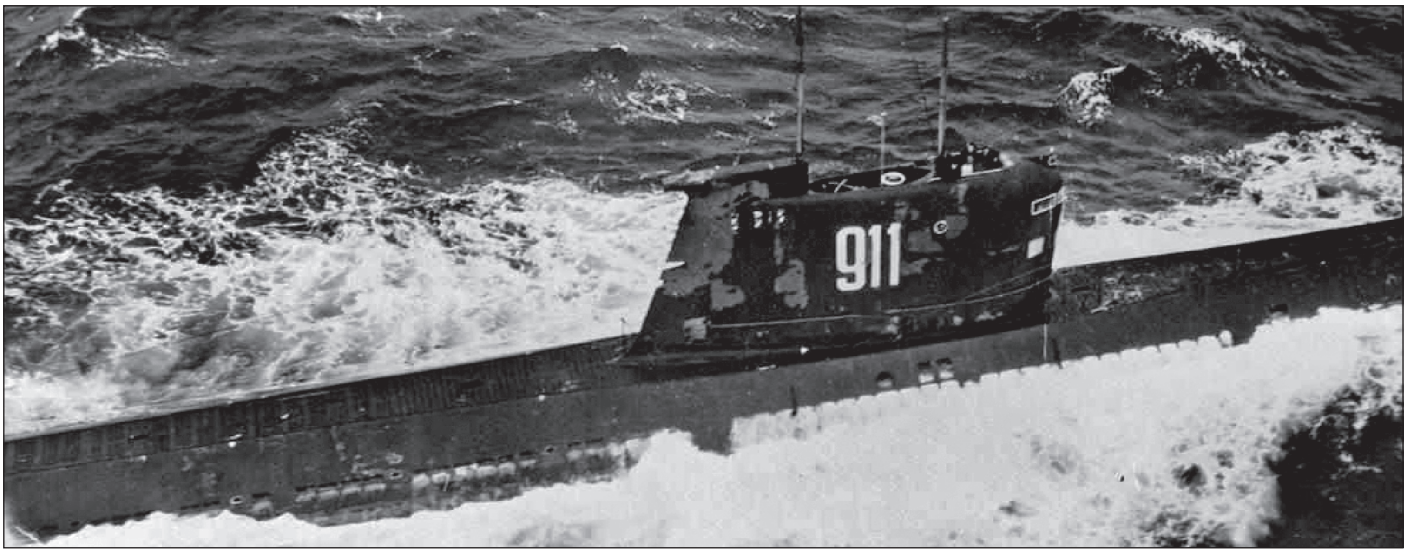
The captain ordered a message be drafted reporting his coordinates, the present situation and the status of the diesel. 'We can transmit when we get back to periscope depth.' The message was sent 42 times before Moscow responded five days later.

Shumkov then ordered, 'Prepare to flood number one, two, three and four torpedo tubes.'

'Sir, number two has the special warhead.'

The Special Weapons Security Officer called for the captain and received an abrupt answer. 'What do you want?'

'Sir, arming the special torpedo requires approval from Special Weapons Directorate of Main Navy Staff.'



Soviet submarine B-36 seen from a patrol aircraft of the US Navy after being forced to the surface. B-36 carried the prominent mission number 911 on its sail. (US Navy Photo)

Shumkov replied sarcastically, 'Well, why don't you deal with headquarters on your little telephone? Oh, it doesn't work a hundred metres below the sea? Just do as you are told and I'll deal with Moscow.'

Maybe it was the tone of the message or fear of what would come next. The Security Officer passed out and fell on his face.

'Sir, engine stopped. All three diesels are still down.'

Shumkov responded, 'Bozbe moi! My God, quick, main engine. Give it all you can.'

His B-130 might not be able to surface, but if they made it, maybe there was a shooting war in progress. The submarine continued to descend.

31 October 1962, Wednesday, Captain Nikolai Shumkov, B-130

Shumkov observed the distance between his submarine and the destroyer increase when they moved in opposite directions. The submarine captain had developed a great respect for the destroyer captain. The destroyer's commander had been cautious but tenacious in his pursuit. He also believed the Americans were aware the submarine had experienced a mechanical failure, but not the magnitude.

The Negotiations

31 October 1962, Wednesday, 1000, UN Secretary-General U Thant and Fidel Castro, Havana, Cuba

When ExComm learned of the lack of progress U Thant had made in Cuba with Castro, the President ordered reconnaissance flights to resume the next day.

U Thant and his officers met for the second time with Castro, Dorticos and Roa. At this meeting, Fidel agreed to return the body of Major Anderson who was killed when his U-2 was shot down over Cuba. In addition, Castro stated that the U-2 was flying over the sovereign country of Cuba and shot down by guns manned by Cubans. He further stated Cuba would shoot down any airplane at any time that flew over Cuba's airspace. U Thant was unable to secure Castro's approval for any form of inspection to confirm the removal of Soviet missiles.

31 October 1962, Wednesday, 1800, President John Kennedy, The White House, Washington, DC

After learning of U Thant's unsuccessful mission to Cuba to secure approval for inspection, Kennedy ordered low-level reconnaissance flights and quarantine operations be resumed, but U-2 flights continued to be suspended.

1 November 1962, Thursday, Captain Edward G. Kelley, USS Blandy (DD-943).

Captain Kelley asked the Watch Officer, 'Are we in communication with the *Keppler* yet?'

'Not yet, sir.'

The Comm Officer had a new radio that boomed, 'Exclamation [*Blandy*], this is Rear Guard [USS *Keppler*], reporting in.' A serious breach of protocol occurred; *Keppler* had called 'Exclamation', *Blandy's* call sign instead of calling 'Abigail Zulu', Commodore Morrison's call sign.

Again the *Keppler* called, 'Exclamation, this is Rear Guard ready to receive you as ordered.'

The Watch Officer answered following a nod from Captain Kelley. 'Rear Guard, this is Exclamation. I will relay to Abigail Zulu that you are reporting as ordered. Out.'

Captain Kelley announced, 'We're now being ordered to start counting missiles departing from Cuba.' Dozens of US destroyers joined *Blandy* to intercept Soviet ships removing equipment and troops from Cuba. The directive ordered the destroyers to move close enough to photograph the deck cargo, the most important being the Medium- and Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missiles. The crews of the Soviet ships wore civilian clothes, but it was not hard to identify the Russians or Ukrainians with high cheekbones from the swarthy Cubans. The executive officer ferreted out a crew member and naturalised US citizen named Walter Dubiki from Czechoslovakia. Dubicki spoke Czech, Ukrainian and some Russian. The Comm Officer worked with Dubicki to prepare messages in simple English which could be translated in Russian.

Blandy sailed close to the merchant ship *Dvinogorsk* and sent light signals in Morse code in English and Russian. 'Begin uncovering your missiles in accordance with the agreement between our two countries.' *Dvinogorsk* complied and came to the designated heading and speed. The Soviet sailors began uncovering the first missile. The *Blandy's* photographer snapped the image on the merchant ship's deck. It was a slow process, uncovering one missile at a time and the photographer snapped the image. The sailors then covered the missiles and moved on to the next one.

Captain Kelley raised a question that had to be elevated all the way to The White House via Atlantic Fleet Headquarters and the Secretary of Defense. The question of Russian compliance that Kelley asked, 'Can you verify those are missiles?' Even uncovered, the cargo on the deck of the Russian ship was questionable. Short of sending a boarding party to the Russian ship, Kelley wrote a message detailing the issue and describing the cargo as he observed it. The problem, addressed by Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatrick, reported to the press on 11 November. 'The Soviets said there were 42 missiles and we counted 42 leaving.'

The *Blandy's* second check was the Soviet ship *Fizik Kurchatov.* Once pulled alongside, the *Blandy* repeated the message signal sent to their first check. The crew of *Fizik Kurchatov* stood on the main deck. As *Blandy* was sending signals to uncover the missiles, a side hatch opened and a female strode over the deck to the railing. At that moment, a gust of wind swept across the deck and blew her skirt up and over her face to the appreciative roar of the *Blandy's* crew. Surprisingly, the response of the Russians appeared the same as the American crew.

1 November 1962, Thursday, 0100, Ambassador to the UN Adlai Stevenson, UN Headquarters, New York, NY

Following his trip to Cuba, UN Secretary-General U Thant reported to Adlai Stevenson that relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union had deteriorated significantly. Specific discussions regarding the Il-28 bombers had not yet been completed; however, the Russians said they were determined to take out all equipment with President Kennedy regarded as 'offensive' which would include the Il-28.

1 November 1962, Thursday, 1000, President John Kennedy, The White House, Washington, DC

The President authorised continued low-level recon flights over the Il-28 airfields and missile bases to determine the extent of withdrawal of equipment. He decided there would be no retaliatory action should a US aircraft be shot down.

At 1459, the President issued instructions to US negotiators in New York for their meetings with First Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan. Kennedy emphasised the importance of the verification of the removal of Soviet equipment. They were also instructed to secure clear confirmation the Il-28s would also be dismantled and removed from Cuba.

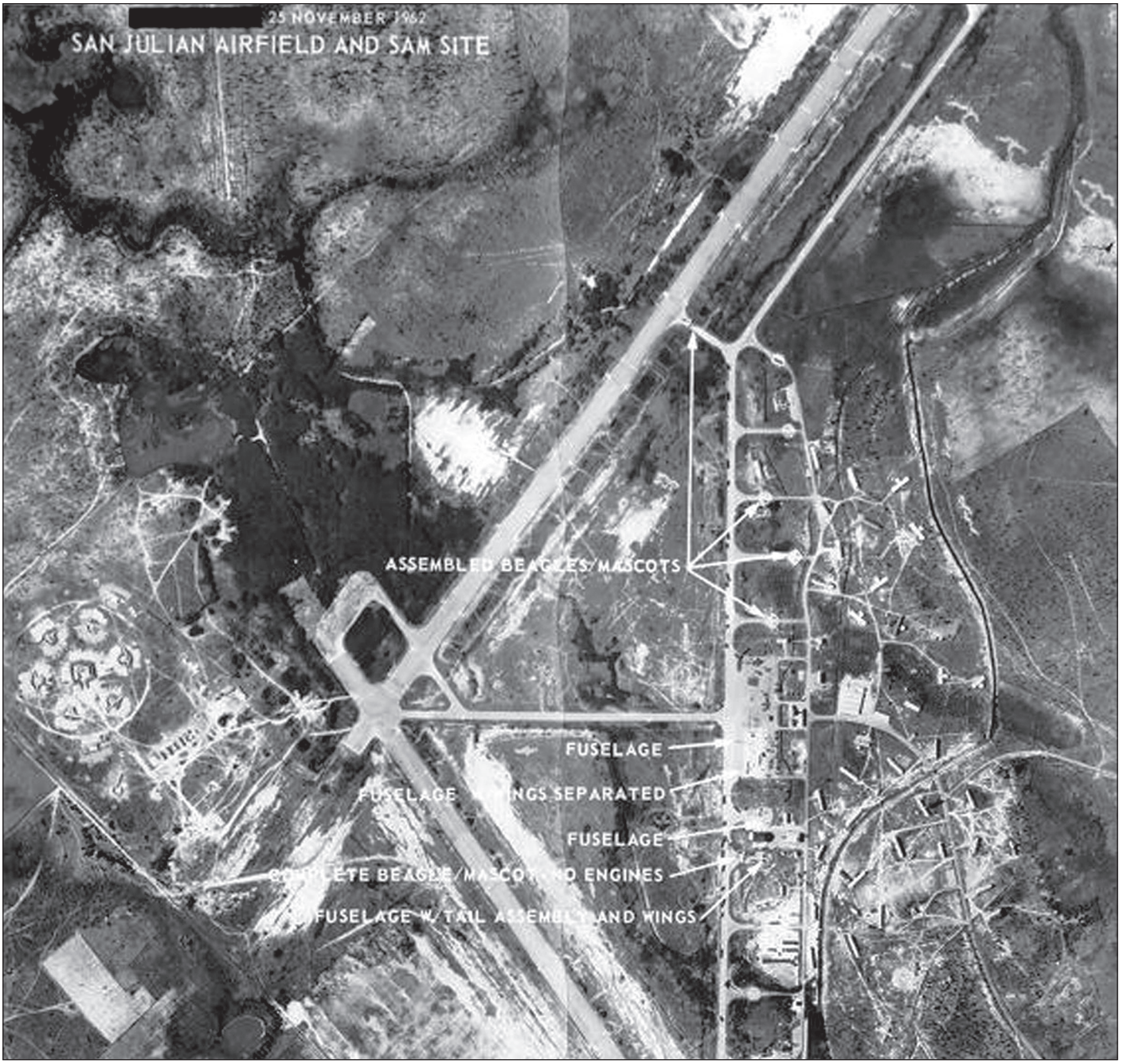
Mikoyan met at 1930 with Adlai Stevenson and John J. McCloy, who had served the First US High Commissioner for Germany and held other notable positions. At the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, McCloy served as Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. Stevenson had been provided a list of 'offensive' weapons the Soviet government had been expected to remove. During the discussions with Mikoyan, the detailed list had been forgotten. The next day Stevenson and McCloy sent Mikoyan a letter confirming their discussions with the list attached.

Fidel Castro went on radio and television in Cuba at 2030 to discuss the resolution of the missile crisis. He stated confidently, 'We have confidence in the leadership of the Soviet Union, and we remember the generosity and friendship they have shown us.'

US photoreconnaissance flights indicated MRBM sites had been bulldozed clear and missiles and launch equipment removed. Construction at IRBM sites appeared to be terminated. Work at the San Julian airfield continued according to intelligence reports but it was difficult to tell if the bombers were being assembled or dismantled.

2 November 1962, Friday, 1000, ExComm Meeting, The White House, Washington, DC

Kennedy confirmed the US would continue to pursue the removal of the Il-28 bombers from Cuba. He stated the quarantine should continue by flagging the vessels entering the zone. US Navy ships had been instructed not to board any Soviet ships in the area.



An aerial reconnaissance photograph taken on 25 November 1962 showing San Julian airfield (centre and right) with a distinctive circular SAM site (middle left). (Albert Grandolini collection)

2 November 1962, Friday, 1030, UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, UN Headquarters, New York, NY

Ambassador Stevenson prepared a letter to Mikoyan which specifically listed weapons the US considered 'offensive.' The letter listed specifically the following:

1. Surface-to-surface missiles, propellants and chemical compounds used to power missiles;
2. Bomber aircraft;
3. Bombs, rockets and guided missiles;
4. Warheads for the above equipment;
5. Mechanical and electronic equipment required to operate the above equipment, including Komar-class torpedo boats.

2 November 1962, Friday, 1730, President John Kennedy, The White House, Washington, DC

The President delivered a televised address to the nation which reported on the status of the dismantling and removal of missiles and equipment in Cuba. Based on recent photographs, the President stated equipment was being crated and sites demolished.

Soviet Submarines Spotted

2 November 1962, Friday, Captain Ryurik Ketov, B-4 in the Caribbean

The sea was calm when the boat surfaced to recharge batteries in the evening. B-4 was a day out of Mariel when Captain Ketov received a message to 'terminate the transit and assume combat patrol.' Ketov expressed shock. The twice daily broadcast offered only domestic news and the Party had the international situation under control. Ketov, like the other boat commanders, authorised the radio operators to listen to American radio broadcasts where he learned of the US blockade on 22 October.

Ketov and Brigade Commander Captain Agafonov decided to move to the southeastern shore of Cuba to escape searchers overhead. When B-4 surfaced to recharge, they observed the lights of the Cuban coastline. The breeze blew smells of charcoal and sugar cane fields burning. It was disappointing to be so close to their goal only to be turned back with the destination in sight. Ketov and his crew had looked forward to spending time on the tropical island.

2 November 1962, Friday, USS Independence (CV-62)

The carrier picked up radar contact of Ketov's submarine B-4. The aircraft carrier was part of Task Force 135 south of Cuba and east of Jamaica. The Americans designated the recent radar contact C21. A Tracker confirmed the contact.

US news broadcasts appeared to grab Ketov's attention; he then decided to move to a shallow depth of 20 metres. Ketov concluded ASW aircraft patrolled overhead. Brigade Commander Agafonov wanted to surface to receive the broadcast on high frequency. Ketov argued against surfacing. He expected destroyers in the area, possibly from the USS *Independence*. Agafonov was senior officer and Ketov was obligated to follow his orders.

'Surface now,' Agafonov ordered.

Ketov pleaded as diplomatically as possible. 'I believe there is an aircraft overhead.'

Agafonov replied, 'I'll check personally.' He raced up the ladder to the main trunk.

He said to Ketov, 'I see no contact. Skies are clear.'

'Sir, I observed an aircraft only a short time ago and it is likely still in the area.'

Agafonov could not be convinced. 'Surface! That's an order.' When B-4 broke the surface, lookouts saw the Neptune aircraft three miles out and dropping grenades. B-4 descended immediately to 100 metres. For four hours, B-4 waited for the Neptunes to leave the area. Surely they would have to be relieved soon. B-4 had only enough battery power for 90 minutes and it was now 100 minutes to sundown. The Soviets had the advantage of the darkness while the aircraft continued searching for the submarine.

2 November 1962, Friday, Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan, Arrives in Havana, Cuba

Upon arrival in Havana, Mikoyan announced the Soviet Union's support for Fidel's 'five points' program. Castro, still angered that the Soviet Union did not consult him before agreeing to withdraw the missiles, held fast to his belief the US would invade Cuba. He refused to meet with Mikoyan, but Ambassador Alekseyev convinced him the meeting would be positive. After receiving assurances from the ambassador that the Soviet government would maintain one combat brigade in Cuba for defence, Castro became less hostile to the visitors.

3 November 1962, Saturday, 2044, President John F. Kennedy and ExComm at The White House, Washington, DC

The President issued instructions regarding the negotiations in Cuba. He stated, 'We have evidence the missile bases are being dismantled. There is still evidence of the Soviets' intent to establish a submarine facility. Current status of the SAM sites is unclear. We have made it clear we want absolutely no offensive weapons in Cuba.'

Kennedy replied to a letter from Khrushchev dated 30 October regarding the inspection and verification before the quarantine can be lifted. If Castro cannot be convinced to allow on-site verification, then maybe sustaining the quarantine can be explained by Mikoyan at the negotiations.

3 November 1962, Saturday, Captain Ryurik Ketov, Onboard B-4

Moscow sent a broadcast message confirming K-4's orders to turn away from the route to Mariel and patrol in a small area. Ketov would use the new RG-10 passive sonar, the only one in the brigade, which enabled the submarine to detect the Americans at greater ranges. When the American ship came close, Ketov ordered the submarine to descend to 120 metres. Eventually the destroyers lost contact, and B-4 became the only submarine of the brigade not forced to surface.

4 November 1962, Sunday, Noon, John J. McCloy Hosted Luncheon Meeting for the Soviet Negotiators

At his Stamford, Connecticut home, McCloy was host to a luncheon with Vasily Kuznetsov and other Soviet negotiators. Kuznetsov announced all missile sites had been dismantled by 2 November, and he proposed the US conduct at-sea inspections. The Soviet Union would provide the schedule for departure of the ships carrying the missiles. The US Navy could then pull alongside the Soviet ship to examine the cargo on deck. In return, Kuznetsov stated the Soviet Union wanted a guarantee the US would not take action against Cuba.

5 November 1962, Monday, 1515, President John F. Kennedy Sends Memo to the Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara

Still uncomfortable about the situation with the Soviet Union, Kennedy sent a memorandum to McNamara suggesting 'the Russians may try again.' The memo advocated the Soviets may be

preparing for action in the sea around Cuba. Admiral Anderson advised McNamara the Soviet Union could indeed place naval forces in Cuba, but he believed US intelligence would detect a buildup. Anderson restated his earlier recommendation that submarines operating out of Cuban bases should be declared offensive weapons and entered on the list of prohibited materials.

The President sent another memorandum to McNamara that suggested the US plans for invasion of Cuba seemed weak. He recommended calling up three US Army Reserve divisions. The Secretary of Defense reported the President's concern to the JCS. On 7 November, JCS met with CINCLANT to sort out details of the recent directive from the President. At the same time, Robert Kennedy met again with Anatoly Dobrynin to exert pressure regarding the Il-28s. U Thant had raised the issue of the Il-28s with Vasily Kuznetsov; however, the Russian responded that the bomber question was a new issue and not covered in the agreement between Kennedy and Khrushchev.

5 November 1962, Monday, Soviet Ships in the Caribbean Near the Quarantine Line

MRBMs and related launch equipment had been loaded on Soviet ships in Cuba. By 9 November, removal of equipment and missiles had been completed.

USAF U-2 Spotted Cuban MiG-21

5 November 1962, Monday, USAF U-2 Spotted Cuban MiG-21

According to USAF 4080th SRW personnel,[9] U-2 aircraft were flown over Cuba from McCoy AFB in Florida where they had been temporarily assigned. Three aircraft were airborne that day with pilot Captain Charles Kern in No. 2 position when suddenly his engine flamed out. With the engine out of service, the generator was also inoperable and so the radio then worked off the battery, but not for long and not well. The lead aircraft was able to forward messages from Kern to the pilot of the RC-121 Warning Star aircraft in the area. The pilot of the RC-121 then broadcast messages to every fighter in the area, including Navy birds.

With the engine out, the aircraft descended regardless of whether it was in denied territory or not. Two MiGs were coming in as hot as their old machines could go. No one knew at what altitude Kern got a relight, but it was likely at approximately 40,000 feet because that was the altitude the engine would usually restart. Kern climbed back up to higher altitude and every US fighter aircraft in the area jammed the airwaves trying to get a shot at the MiGs which scuttled off when the action started getting heated.

7 November 1962, Captain Aleksei Dubivko, B-36

In observance of the Soviet national holiday for the October Revolution, B-36 surfaced in the late evening in calm flat seas to allow the crew to go topside to wash. He had allowed crewmen to be rotated for a shower, but this was his first chance for a wash for himself. While the captain enjoyed his own shower, the executive officer forgot both outboard diesels were online and failed to purge the air intakes.[10] Only one working diesel remained. The engineers immediately began the process of repairing the outboard diesel. The submarine received its orders to return home. The engineers had the malfunctioning diesel back in operation by the time the submarine sailed west of the UK heading into the Norwegian Sea.

7 November 1962, Wednesday, 1600, Ambassador to Moscow, Foy Kohler

Kohler dispatched a cable to ExComm that reported no doubt the events of the previous 10 days had shaken the Soviet leadership. Premier Khrushchev had stated privately that a summit with President Kennedy should not be rushed.

7 November 1962, Wednesday, 1700, President John Kennedy and ExComm, The White House, Washington, DC

ExComm received a report that withdrawal of Soviet missiles in Cuba continued. Kennedy said there would be no invasion of Cuba with the missiles removed. He suggested a formal non-invasion

Soviet and Cuban personnel preparing a MiG-21F-13 (bort number 29) of the 213th Fighter Aviation Regiment for a training mission. Notable on the fin is the Cuban insignia and a crudely overpainted Soviet red star. (Albert Grandolini collection)

commitment might be issued once the IlL-28 bombers were also removed. There was some uncertainty about how to handle the Il-28 situation if they were not removed. Should the US be firm or accept that the Soviets had removed the missiles as their agreement indicated?

7 November 1962, Wednesday, 2130, Ambassador to the UN Adlai Stevenson, New York, NY

Secretary of State Rusk reported to Adlai Stevenson that the primary goal had been to have the MRBMs and Il-28 bombers removed from Cuba, which reduced the list of offensive weapons. The US later dropped the demand for removal of Komar-class missile boats to focus on the Il-28 bombers.

8 November 1962, Thursday, 1630, ExComm Meeting, The White House, Washington DC

The President and ExComm met to discuss ways to pressure Cuba into removing the Il-28 bombers. Several ideas were considered including tightening the quarantine, initiating covert action against Castro and sending air strikes against the Il-28s.

8 November 1962, Thursday, CIA Task Force W's Covert Action in Cuba

A six-man CIA sabotage team from Task Force W blew up a Cuban industrial facility. Although all Task Force W operations had been suspended on 30 October, Director of Task Force W, William Harvey ordered teams of agents into Cuba on his own authority to support any conventional US military action that might occur. The action on 8 November was never raised in US-Soviet discussions.

8 November 1962, Thursday, Department of Defense Report on MRBM and IRBM Missiles

The Defense Department reported all known MRBM and IRBM missiles on Soviet bases in Cuba had been dismantled and a substantial number loaded on Soviet ships or had been moved to Cuban ports.

U Thant reported to Castro to offer a new proposal for inspection and verification that the missiles had been removed. The proposal included ambassadors from five Asian, African, European and Latin American countries together confirm withdrawal of the missiles. Cuba rejected the proposal.

8
RESOLUTION

Soviet Submarines Limp Home

8 November 1962, Thursday, Captain Nikolai Shumkov, B-130, Sailing Northeast

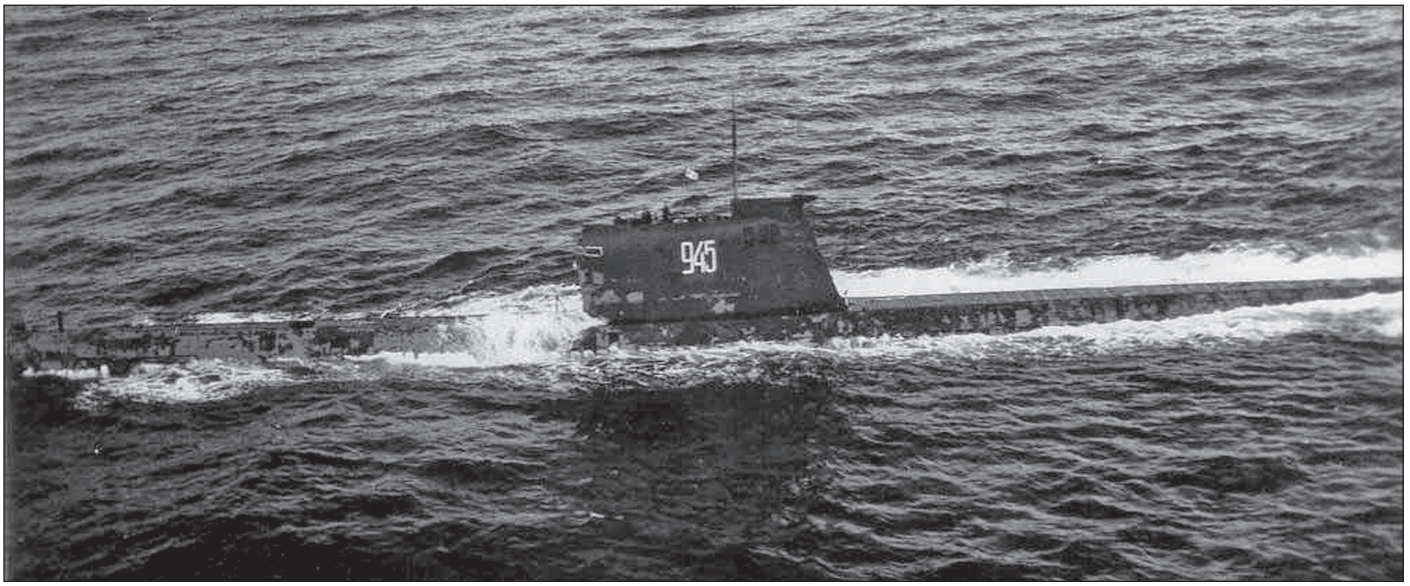
The USS *Keppler* (DD-765) escorted B-130 on a northeast direction through heavy seas as the submarine pushed on at only one and a half knots. The rescue tug *Pamir* could only sail at 10 knots. The Soviet Northern Fleet Submarine Command reported that the replacement drive gears for the diesel engines were onboard the rescue tug.

Shumkov summoned Chief Mechanic Parshin regarding the incoming shipment of parts for the diesels. Parshin stated: 'Sir, we told them the repairs could only be done in dry dock. We can't possibly replace the gears at sea.'

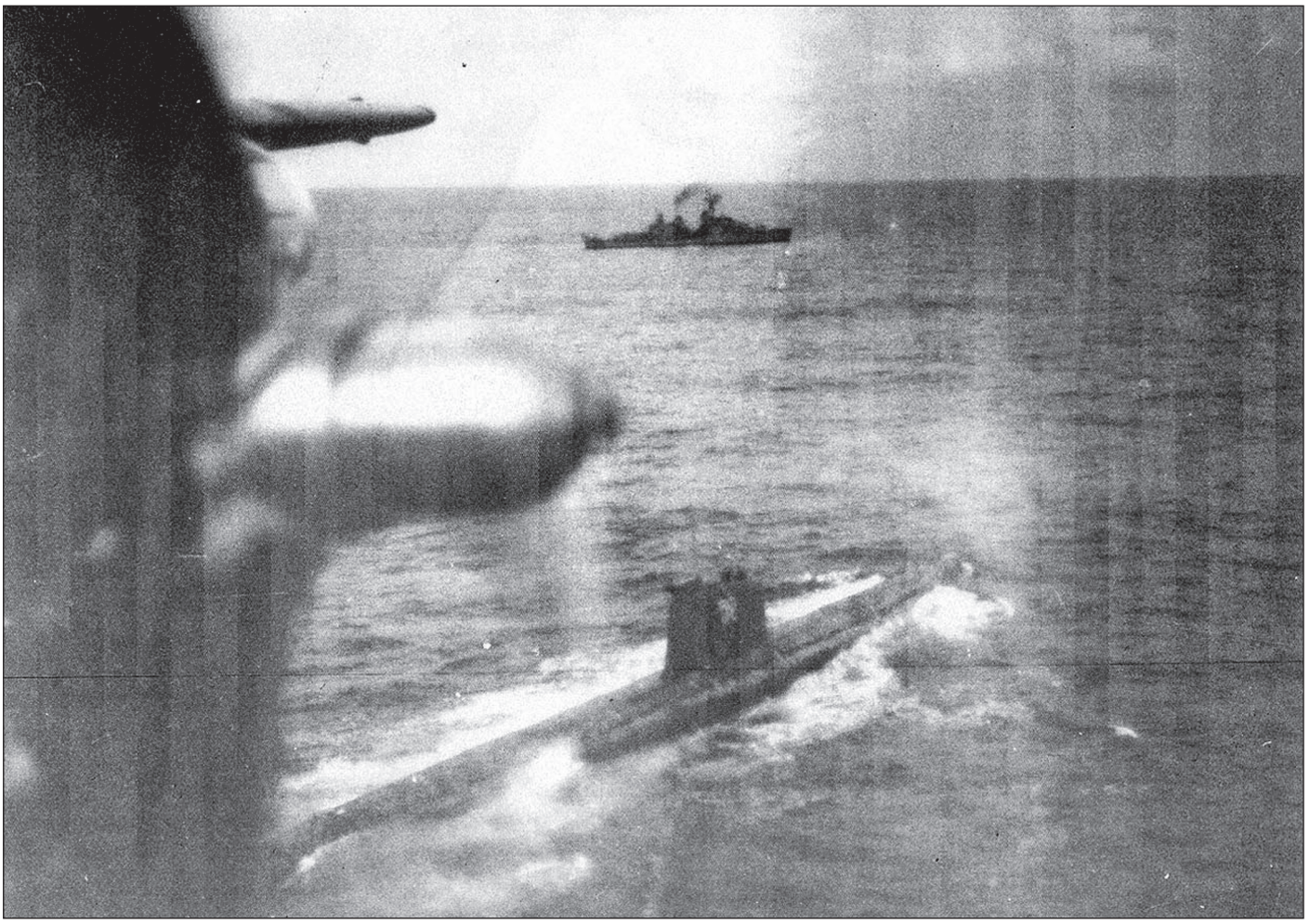
Prior to sailing, Shumkov had learned of the cracks, but he did not understand Parshin's explanation. Parshin explained more simply: 'The broken gears will be removed in two pieces. Then we have to cut a plate in the hull with dimensions of two metres by one and a half metres. We have the welding equipment, but it simply cannot be done in this weather. Even in port it needs to be done in dry dock. The only solution is for *Pamir* to tow us back to port.'

When the *Pamir* was spotted on the horizon, Shumkov thought, 'Now we have two escorts, one of ours and one of theirs, plus a Neptune above. It appears we are well looked after.'

After much chatter and cursing, the tug captain realised he had a serious job. After two failed attempts, they finally rigged a 300-metre towline which worked well. The tug and its humiliated submarine crew sped homeward at the great speed of five knots.



A clear view of B-130, showing mission number 945, photographed once the crippled vessel had turned back north. (US Navy Photo)



The Foxtrot-class submarine B-130, photographed from a US patrol aircraft, after being forced to surface with a destroyer of the US Navy nearby. (Albert Grandolini collection)

9 November 1962, Friday, Soviet Ships Depart from Cuba.
Soviet ships loaded with MRBMs depart Cuba. The vessels *Bratsk*, *Dvinogorsk*, *I. Polzunov*, *Labinsk*, *M. Anosov* and *Volgoles* departed Mariel on 5 November. The *F. Kurchatov* and the *L. Komsomol* departed from Casilda. The ships were inspected at sea as the Soviet crews removed canvas covers from the missile transporters.

12 November 1962, Sunday, Ambassador to UN Adlai Stevenson Reports to ExComm
Stevenson told ExComm that the Il-28 negotiations were deadlocked at the UN. The President and ExComm discussed possible deals that could be made: Additional assurances of non-invasion of Cuba and lifting on-site inspections. The meeting ended without a firm decision. President Kennedy ordered the SAC alert status to remain unchanged for the moment.

12 November 1962, Sunday Evening, President John Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy, The White House, Washington, DC
The President directed his brother, Robert, to meet with Ambassador Dobrynin and tell him Khrushchev's solemn 'word' about the Il-28s would suffice. The US would not immediately insist on the removal of the Il-28s but would urge they be withdrawn within 30 days.

13 November 1962, Monday, 1000, ExComm Meeting, The White House, Washington, DC
In a direct contrast from the President's position a day earlier, ExComm continued to discuss the Il-28 issue and suggested a sequence of actions designed to break the deadlock. The group recommended a 'last chance' message to Khrushchev. If it failed to achieve the desired result, such actions as tightening the blockade, requesting other Latin American countries to apply diplomatic pressure and finally using low-altitude reconnaissance flights as a form of psychological warfare could be applied.

15 November 1962, Wednesday, 2000, President John Kennedy, The White House, Washington, DC
Kennedy wrote to Khrushchev regarding the continuing issue of Il-28 removal. The letter objected to the three major areas of Soviet responsibility: removal of the Il-28s, arrangement for verification and safeguards against reintroduction.

Robert Kennedy notified Anatoly Dobrynin that the Il-28 issue had reached a peak. Unless the matter was resolved, their two countries would find themselves in a situation of increased tension again.

15 November 1962, Wednesday, 1900, Secretary-General of the UN, U Thant, UN Headquarters, New York, NY

Fidel Castro wrote a five-page letter to U Thant and warned that Cuba planned to fire on US reconnaissance flights over his airspace. Castro stated further: 'The US had already inspected Soviet ships, and Cuba will continue to reject inspection on its territory.'

US intelligence sources reported Soviet control of the Cuban air defences had tightened sharply. Cuban fighter aircraft had been practicing low-level flights in the Havana area.

16 November 1962, Thursday, 0700, US Navy Exercise at Onslow Beach, North Carolina

The largest amphibious landing exercise in the region since the Second World War began. The two-day exercise in preparation for an invasion of Cuba included six Marine battalion landing teams, four assault ships, and two helicopter assault carriers.

At 1600 JCS reported to the President on the readiness of the forces designated for military action against Cuba. The generals reported the status of readiness: 100,000 Army troops, 40,000 Marines, 14,500 paratroopers, 550 combat aircraft, and 180 ships to support an invasion. General Maxwell Taylor told Kennedy this state of readiness could be maintained for 30 days. His report also recommended continued pressure on the Soviet Union to remove the bombers and extend the quarantine to include products such as petroleum, oil and lubricants. If the strategy was not successful, the US should be prepared to initiate air strikes.

An M-50 Ontos vehicle of the USMC, with six 106mm recoilless rifles, is seen during a training exercise at Guantánamo Bay. (Albert Grandolini collection)

A Boeing C-135B transport of the USAF Military Air Transport Service seen with US troops at Leeward Point Field, Guantanamo. (Albert Grandolini collection)

US troops preparing for action at 'Gitmo.' (Albert Grandolini collection)

US Marines armed with M1 Garand rifles train alongside M48 tanks at Guantánamo Bay. (Albert Grandolini collection)

18 November 1962, Sunday, UN Headquarters, New York, NY

John McCloy and Adlai Stevenson met with Vasily Kuznetsov and Valerian Zorin to resolve the stalemate about the Il-28s. They advised the Russians that the President had scheduled a press conference at 1800, 20 November, and the US wanted a pledge that the bombers would be removed by that time. The US had concerns about the continued presence of four reinforced Soviet troop regiments in Cuba. Stevenson reported to ExComm the meeting ended with no indication of a commitment.

19 November 1962, Monday, 1000, President John Kennedy and ExComm Meet, The White House, Washington, DC

The President advised ExComm that he had authorised high-level reconnaissance flights to resume but suspended low-level flights. In the afternoon, Robert Kennedy met with Georgi Bolshakov and warned of the continuation of low-level flights should the Soviet Union fail to remove the Il-28s. The Attorney General stated firmly he expected a response to the Il-28 issue before the President's press conference.

President Kennedy issued letters to Charles de Gaulle, Konrad Adenauer and Harold MacMillan warning of further US action, possibly air strikes, if the Il-28s were not removed. Similar messages were sent to Latin American heads of state as well.

19 November 1962, Monday, Fidel Castro, Havana, Cuba and U Thant, UN Headquarters, New York, NY

Castro informed U Thant that the Cuban government had no objection to the Soviet Union removing the Il-28s from Cuba. He announced in the letter that the bombers were the property of the Soviet Union and they may do with them as they wish. However, Castro warned, any aircraft invading Cuban airspace risked destruction from ground forces. He also restated his rejection of any inspection of Cuban territory. Cuba and the Soviet Union had recently signed an agreement to allow an instruction centre to remain on the island where Cuban troops could receive training on Soviet military equipment.

20 November 1962, Tuesday, Captain Ryurik Ketov, B-4

Ketov received orders to return to Polyarny. Following receipt of the orders to return to home base, B-4's radio operators intercepted a message from US Atlantic Fleet Command thanking the Soviet submariners for the opportunity for mutual operations.

20 November 1962, Tuesday, President John Kennedy Directs a Message to Premier Khrushchev

Through Ambassador Dobrynin, President Kennedy issued a verbal message to Khrushchev that announced a reduced state of alert for US forces. The President delivered the same information at his planned press conference.

Premier Khrushchev in a lengthy letter to the President formally agreed to remove the Il-28s from Cuba, and further reminded Kennedy of their previous correspondence which had made no mention of the Il-28 bombers. He further stated the bombers would be removed within a month.

The Quarantine Lifted

At 1530 ExComm agreed to formally lift the quarantine and cancel the SAC alert. No low-level flights would be ordered for 21 November. However, U-2 flights were scheduled to verify the dismantling and removal of Il-28 bombers.

At 1800 President Kennedy announced at a scheduled press conference:

> I have today been informed by Chairman Khrushchev that all Il-28 bombers in Cuba will be removed within 30 days. I have ordered the naval quarantine to be lifted immediately. If all weapons are removed from Cuba and Cuba will not be used to export aggressive communist purposes, there will be peace in the Caribbean.

At 2330 JCS ordered SAC to return to normal status and lowered the alert status from DEFCON 2 to DEFCON 4.

21 November 1962, Wednesday, President John Kennedy Issues Letter to Premier Nikita Khrushchev

The President sent a letter commending the Premier's decision to remove the Il-28s in Cuba. He stated further: 'As you will have seen, I announced the lifting of the quarantine at my press conference on the basis of your assurance the Il-28s will be removed within a month. There need be no fear of any invasion of Cuba while matters take their favorable course.'

29 November 1962, Thursday, 1000, President John Kennedy Meets with ExComm, The White House, Washington, DC

ExComm met with the President to discuss recent intelligence reports regarding Cuba, a US policy on the Il-28 issue, the future of Operation Mongoose and a post-mortem of the 15–28 October events.

President Kennedy and Secretary of State Rusk met with Anastas Mikoyan at 1630 for three hours rehashing earlier issues, such as confirmation the US will not invade Cuba. The President reassured Mikoyan that the US had no intention to invade Cuba but reminded the ambassador that other conditions in his letters with Khrushchev had not been met. He specifically referred to on-site verification that there would be no reintroduction of offensive weapons.

The Soviets Return Home

3 December 1962, Nighttime, Captain Nikolai Shumkov, En Route to Polyarny Onboard B-130

The tug arrived in Polyarny towing the great submarine, B-130. Two days later, on 5 December, the tug and the towed vessel arrived at Kola where Shumkov learned their tug had ordered two harbour tugs to continue to haul B-130 to port. However, during the journey across the Atlantic, B-130's crew had managed to fully charge the batteries using the remaining diesel at low power. Shumkov ordered the tow line dropped as they passed the meeting point for the harbour tugs. B-130 made it back to the same pier they departed from on 1 October with heads held high.

Shumkov knew there would be no traditional arrival ceremony because of the secrecy of their mission. The captain observed a single vehicle, a black Volga, parked under the pier lights; he had no idea who might be inside. Likely it would be Brigade Commander Agafonov had he not been on B-4 somewhere in the Atlantic.

When the lines were tied over the cleats on the pier and the engines shut down, Shumkov peered into the dark night with heavy snow flurries. He looked again to the Volga and spotted a large figure emerge. The gold shoulder boards with the star of an admiral and a senior officer's fur cap told him the identity of the figure walking toward the ship. Shumkov quickly climbed down the ladder to the

main deck and crossed over to the pier. The admiral raised his hand and shouted: 'Stay. I'll come aboard.'

Admiral Leonid Rybalko strode purposefully to the vessel. Shumkov saluted and said respectfully: '*Ztorovye zhelau* (to your health).' Rybalko stepped onboard and grasped the captain's outstretched hand in both of his.

The admiral removed his cap and said: 'I'm glad you returned safely. How are your men?' In Shumkov's career this was the first time an admiral had asked about the welfare of his crew.

Shumkov responded: 'Sir, they are well, a little tired, a little thin, a few minor medical problems. A little rest and fresh air will be good medicine.'

Rybalko appeared genuine in his inquiry about the crew. He said:

> I am very disappointed how things turned out. It should not have occurred like that. There was no excuse for sending you into that confused event without giving you all the facts. It was definitely criminal to send you in blind. I have protested to the Fleet Commander in Chief who was also quite concerned. Main Navy Staff appears to be frozen in silence.

The admiral continued:

> I am obligated to pass on orders to you because of your operational exposure to the Americans. You and your crew will be restricted to your boat until a full investigation is completed. The entire operation is still secret and the results more so. At first the secrecy was imposed to protect Operation Kama. Now it is to protect the navy and the government from embarrassment. I must return to Polyarny, but I hated the thought that you had returned from this debacle without anyone to meet you and your crew.

At that moment, a large truck rattled down the pier, and stopped by the bow. Rybalko moved toward the bow and said, 'We have brought you and your men some refreshments to celebrate your safe arrival.'

Two orderlies crossed the bow with two large boxes and then returned to the truck for more. Rybalko said: 'These are fresh stores for you now. More will be coming. I had to arrange for these myself. The base commander was ordered not to replenish the boat until later, but I believe you would appreciate a little relief from your ordeal.'

Rybalko again shook hands with Shumkov. 'The investigation will begin when Brigade Commander Agafonov arrives on B-4, and we expect them within 48 hours. I am truly sorry for all of this.'

The admiral turned, saluted the officer of the watch and returned to the Volga parked in the same spot as when it arrived.

Shumkov went below to the officers' mess where he saw tables laden with plates of fresh green salads, sardines, pickled herring and sliced beef tongue. Several bottles of chilled vodka and champagne lined the side table.

Captain Shumkov went to the crew mess where a similar spread sat on tables, courtesy of Admiral Rybalko and his wife. After a brief speech of thanks to his men, the senior petty officer handed him a small glass of vodka. It was against protocol to drink with the crew, but they had long since passed that rule. The petty officer raised his glass. 'Sir, we wish to drink with you, to our boat, our families and your leadership.'

Shumkov was deeply touched by the toast and said, 'We could not have done better. I am nothing without you.'

Cuban and Soviet personnel in front of a reassembled Il-28s of the 759th Torpedo-Bomber Regiment, at San Julian in October 1962. (Albert Grandolini collection)

4 December 1962, Tuesday, 1730, ExComm Meets to Discuss Future Policy Toward Cuba

The President did not attend this meeting where members discussed future policy toward Cuba. All agreed that future overflights of Cuba should continue to confirm removal of the Il-28 bombers and ensure no reintroduction of offensive weapons. McCone contacted McGeorge Bundy to strongly recommended that diplomatic measures be taken to ensure Part 2 of the Cuban Missile Crisis did not occur with the US striking Soviet-controlled bases in Cuba.

11 December 1962, Captain Valentin Savitsky and Crew Onboard B-59

In the pitch dark of the early morning hours, B-59 moored beside B-130. The crews of both boats came on to the weather decks to send welcome greetings to each other. The next morning Brigade Chief of Staff Arkhipov left to plead for the crews of the submarines to be billeted onshore. He received the same order as the others to remain on their boats.

13 December 1962, Monday, Captain Aleksei Dubivko and Crew Onboard B-36

Dubivko signalled from B-36 that he was at North Cape with only a small amount of fuel remaining. As the three crews settled to await the last boat, they were ordered not to mingle with the crews of other boats. A detachment of guards arrived to prevent the crews from leaving their boats as if they were prisoners. Initially the captains were angry to be treated like criminals, but they soon realised they would not have to station deck sentries or a pier watch. Given the storm conditions that night, they soon felt grateful to be able to stay inside.

Dubivko and his crew had plenty of stories to tell about their own voyage. An unexplained loss of two tons of fuel resulted in much creative thinking from the chief mechanic. They had over 20 tons of lubricating oil which the engineer proposed to mix with the remaining diesel and some water to feed one engine and charge batteries. Fortunately, the process worked successfully and B-36 limped home much to the captain's amazement. The submarine rounded the turn into the channel at Sayda Bay with everyone relieved to see the other three boats moored together at the same pier. Crews of the three other submarines cheered loudly as B-36 tied up.

16 December 1962, Captain Ryurik Ketov and Crew Onboard B-4

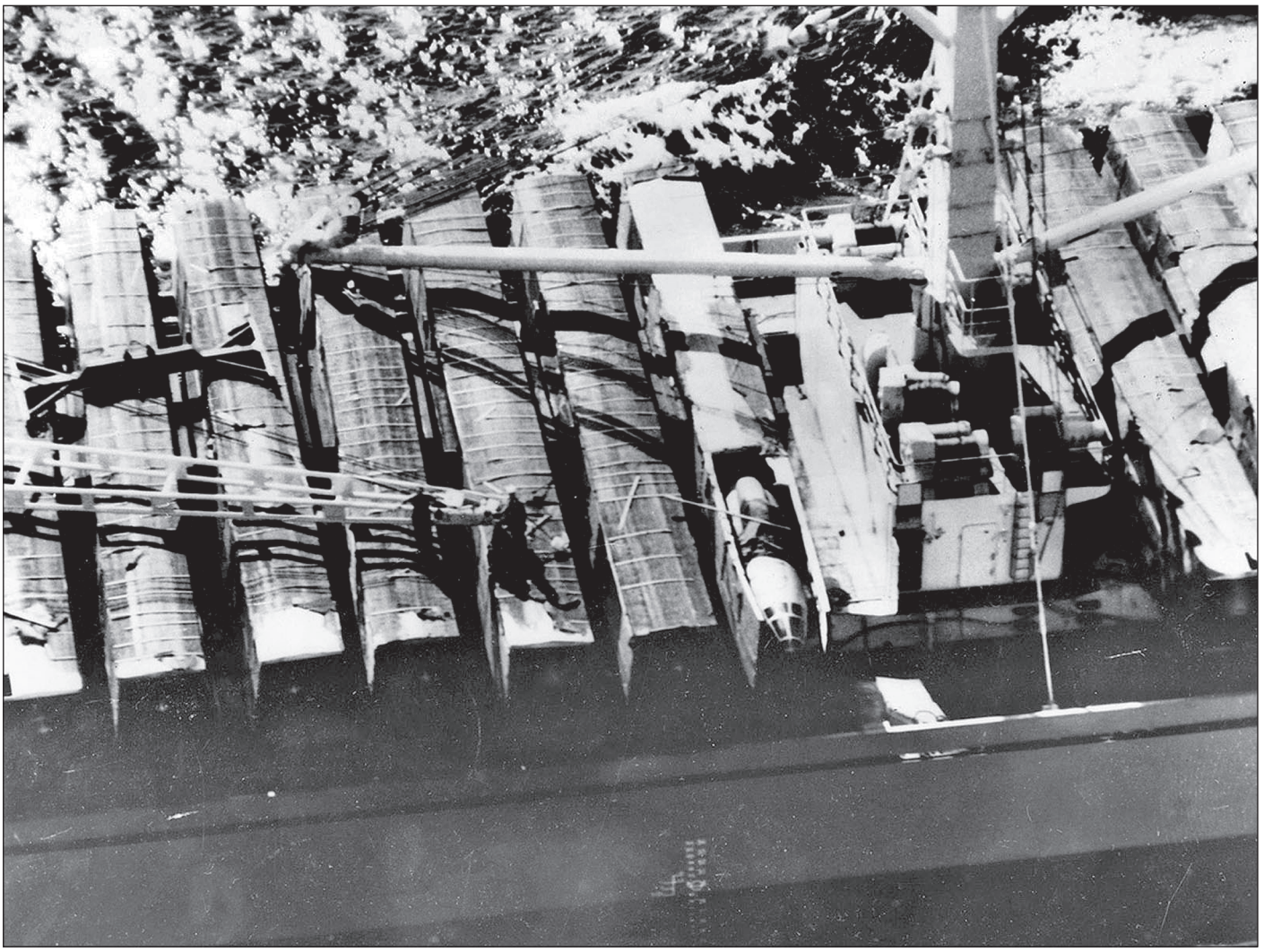
Ketov and Agafonov arrived back at Polyarny on 16 December and were confined to their boat I the same fashion as Shumkov and his crew. Fresh water was delivered to their submarine, and they showered for the first time in many weeks. Both captains would have preferred to have the crews billeted in a barracks onshore; however, they realised it was for security reasons. The high officials of the government wanted no unofficial word of the Soviet Navy's embarrassing plight in the Caribbean at the hands of the US ASW forces to leak out.

Medical officers arrived to examine the crews and treat their rashes and sores. The doctors prescribed medications and ordered fresh water for washing, something they all needed.

19 December 1962, Premier Nikita Khrushchev, the Kremlin, Moscow, Soviet Union

Khrushchev sent another of his lengthy letters, this time recommending an end to nuclear tests. He stated, 'With the elimination of the Cuban crisis we relieved mankind of the direct menace of combat use of lethal nuclear weapons.' Kennedy responded to the Premier's letter on 28 December. Negotiations subsequently led to the eventual signing of a limited test-ban treaty on 5 August 1963.

An Il-28 bomber based in Cuba seen following an accident, evidently having run off the runway and suffering a nose gear collapse. (Albert Grandolini collection)



A vessel heading back to the USSR with crated Il-28 bombers, one crate opened to be counted by American patrol aircraft. (Albert Grandolini collection)

9
WRAP-UP

Postscript

For more than a year, Soviet Military Intelligence Officer Oleg Penkovsky, provided Top Secret documents to British and American agents. One of the documents he delivered was the Technical Manual for the R-12 missile system, together with layout of the missile site and description of readiness levels. Penkovsky was subsequently arrested at his apartment and taken to Lubyanka Prison for interrogation by the KGB chief Vladimir Semichastny. Penkovsky cooperated and revealed details of his betrayal.

The Final Chapter

Jim Donovan, the lone US negotiator for the Bay of Pigs prisoners' release, lost his bid for the New York Senate seat on 6 November 1962. He then rededicated himself to his plan to return the prisoners held in Cuba to the US. Alvaro Sanchez, President of the Cuban Families Committee (CFC), met with Attorney General Robert Kennedy on 24 November to make a plea to rescue the Brigade prisoners. Sanchez had visited Cuba and met with the prisoners, most still wearing the same camouflage uniform as when they were captured. He observed the severely malnourished men, extremely ill, and some of cadaver-like appearance. Sanchez made a strong case for bringing the prisoners home by Christmas, only a month away.

More details, including increased indemnity, had to be resolved between Donovan and Castro. To complete the return of the prisoners by Christmas seemed almost impossible. Robert Kennedy supported the CFC but avoided any direct action by the US government. Although Donovan was still considered the lead on the operation, many of President Kennedy's New Frontiersmen joined the team as well. At this point on Monday, 3 December, the President approved the effort and Robert Kennedy called his own team of assistants throughout the Justice Department, mostly experienced attorneys. Louis Oberdorfer, Assistant Attorney General of the Tax Division, became the leader of the prisoner exchange operation. During the next month, all the men involved in the operation lived at the offices of the Justice Department, 24 hours, seven days a week, and slept on sofas, chairs or whatever space they could find.

Representatives from other agencies each had a vital part in the operation: Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Justice, State

and Treasury, CIA, Civil Aeronautics Board, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Interstate Commerce Commission, and US Coast Guard. The planners finally settled on the basic medical products the Cubans needed. Team members knew nothing of the requirements for transporting tons of pharmaceuticals to Cuba. The Christmas target date created an urgency to bring the prisoners home. Attorney John Nolan, Jr, subsequently an assistant of Robert Kennedy, had a significant role in the project. Nolan had worked on John Kennedy's 1960 campaign and was recognised for his diligence and professionalism. In additional to Nolan, the other team members were Lou Oberdorfer, E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr, John Douglas, and Raymond J. Rasenberger. All these dedicated men voluntarily put their lives on hold during the weeks prior to Christmas. They all believed it a chance to restore some of the honour America had lost when it abandoned the exiles on the beaches of Cuba. Nolan echoed the thoughts of the team: 'It wasn't a question of whether or not we were going to do it; we were going to do it.'[1]

In a meeting on 7 December 1962, with a group of the American Pharmaceutical Association, Robert Kennedy admitted, 'These men fought well; the disaster was no fault of theirs. They are our responsibility.'

Robert Kennedy's upbeat attitude inspired the group of attorneys who worked out of the Justice Department offices. The attorneys called the presidents of every major pharmaceutical and baby food manufacturer in the US. Although their speeches emphasized that the companies would receive 'no monetary reimbursement or special favors', mentioning the President's personal interest often opened doors for support. The company presidents eagerly agreed when advised the IRS allowed the complete write-off of their contributions. Almost 200 companies donated products valued at approximately US $53 million, from medicines to baby food and everything in between.

Transportation of the donated products became a challenge for the planning team. The American Red Cross had unique experience moving vast quantities of humanitarian supplies. The Red Cross also secured a letter of credit to deliver to the Cuban government, a difficult challenge to complete the week before Christmas when most businesses in the US worked on less than full staffs. Castro agreed to release the prisoners when he received 20 percent of the agreed upon donations. However, he demanded, 'A letter of credit guaranteeing any shortfall of the final shipment.' Due to the US trade embargos on Cuba, locating a financial institution to issue a US $53 million letter of credit proved to be complicated. On 14 December, Nicholas Katzenbach, travelled to Montreal, Canada to secure a letter of credit from the Royal Bank of Canada. Bank of America and Morgan Guaranty Trust agreed to cover the Canadian bank's risk. Then the American Red Cross guaranteed delivery with an insurance bond.

Even with all the efforts of the Kennedy brothers, the deal depended on Fidel Castro and Jim Donovan. As products arrived in Florida, Donovan returned to Cuba on 18 December to meet with Castro and finalise the details of the deal they made before the Cuban Missile Crisis. A short time before Donovan departed from the US, he learned a child of one of Castro's assistants needed a medication unavailable in Cuba. Donovan then requested 10 vials of the medicine from Bethesda Naval Hospital and hand-delivered it to Havana. Castro expressed his scepticism that the Americans could accomplish the deal. To relieve Castro's concern, Donovan suggested he send a few of his men to check the products awaiting shipment in Florida. Donovan recognised it was a risky move; if any of the exiles in Miami learned of Castro's men in the area, disastrous consequences could result. Surprisingly, Castro accepted the offer and sent members of the Cuban Red Cross to check the products.

Friday, 21 December, the Royal Bank of Canada issued the letter of credit which was hand-delivered to Castro by 1500 that afternoon. Donovan and Castro signed a Memorandum of Agreement the same day.

Three men of the Cuban Red Cross departed Havana and arrived at Miami International Airport on 22 December at 0100. The Cubans were met and escorted by John Nolan, Barrett Prettyman and Dr. Leonard Schule, former Surgeon General of the US. The group first inspected products at Opa Locka Air Base. They proceeded to Port Everglades where a ship, the *African Pilot* had been loaded to the maximum extent possible.[2]

The Cuban Red Cross men questioned the need for Alka-Seltzer, Listerine and aspirin, products they had obviously never seen or used. Nolan explained the uses of the products to the Cubans' satisfaction. Following the Cuban Red Cross approval of the planned shipment, the men expressed a desire to go to the nearby Howard Johnson Motel to rest where much of the housekeeping staff were Cuban. Nolan and the Americans became alarmed considering the possibility of the Cuban exiles learning of the nearby presence of Castro's men.

Nolan told the Cuban Red Cross men, 'We might be able to provide protection for you, but I can't be certain. No arrangements have been made.' Reconsidering their plans, the Red Cross men decided to return to Cuba that afternoon.

While the *African Pilot* sailed from Miami with the first shipment of products for Cuba, Castro and Donovan observed the occasion with champagne and cigars. They expected this to be the conclusion of the deal.

On Sunday, 23 December, guards woke the Brigade prisoners with the news that Castro planned to release them that day. The prisoners believed it to be a cruel joke, but they were ushered outside for some much-needed sunshine. A signal of something big in the making, the food improved significantly and even included chicken, beef and pork, a very rare feast. Prisoners marched to the nearby airfield at San Antonio de los Banos. Another surprise awaited them, new clothes and shoes. Uniformed and armed Cuban soldiers stood alert. American Immigration and Naturalization Service officers stood ready at the airfield to process appropriate paperwork for entry into the US.

John Nolan came to San Antonio de los Banos to help Donovan with any last-minute details. Nolan experienced his first meeting with Castro. As they stood at the edge of the airfield, a Pan American DC-6B #N6532C with 107 Brigade men departed mid-afternoon and arrived at Homestead AFB at sunset. The Brigade men raced off the aircraft into a crowd of their loved ones who found it hard to believe the soldiers really had been freed.

After four aircraft and 426 Brigade men had departed, 623 prisoners remained awaiting their own release. At that time, Castro reminded Donovan he had not received the US $2.9 million for the 60 wounded prisoners released in April. Fidel demanded the payment immediately or the prisoner release would cease.

John Nolan returned to Homestead where Lou Oberdorfer met him. They quickly called Katzenbach in Washington and explained their problem. At 0500 on 24 December Katzenbach called Robert Kennedy and explained the situation in Cuba. After Nolan spoke with Katzenbach and Kennedy, he returned to Cuba and reported to Donovan everything would be resolved.

Robert Kennedy raised US $1 million from Cardinal Richard Cushing, the Catholic Archbishop of Boston. Cushing, an

experienced fundraiser, had a close relationship with the entire Kennedy family. The remainder of the funds were quickly collected, and arrangements made with the Royal Bank of Canada to issue a check for US $2.9 million to its branch in Havana. Castro received the check by 1500, 24 December 1962.

Airplanes quickly resumed flights of prisoners to Miami where celebrations awaited. After the last planeload of prisoners landed, Katzenbach notified Robert Kennedy, 'They are all home. It's over.'

On 29 December, President and Mrs Kennedy went to Miami to address the Brigade at the Orange Bowl Stadium and commemorate their homecoming. Following the President's address, Pepe San Ramon presented him with a Brigade flag. Kennedy told the men, 'I can assure you, this flag will be returned to the Brigade in a free Cuba.'

APPENDIX: PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

Buddy L. Brown

My mission photographing and locating Soviet missiles on the Island of Cuba began October 1962. Prior to the Strategic Air Command being assigned the Cuban mission, the CIA had been monitoring the weapons' movement with their own U-2Cs. As a result of the increasing tension between the US and the Soviet Union President Kennedy wanted to avoid embarrassment of a clandestine CIA plane being lost over Cuba. He then decided USAF pilots would fly the reconnaissance mission. The wheels were put in motion.

There were 11 pilots initially involved in the "Missiles of October" crisis. This is my personal account of my first Cuba mission and the events leading up to it.

I don't remember how I was notified, but Jerry McIlmoyle and I were flown out to Edwards AFB, California to sit in and listen to the dialog between the SAC brass and the CIA brass regarding who should take over and fly the Cuban mission,[1] the CIA or USAF. The meeting was in the evening at the North Base Operations building. Jerry and I were sitting at the back of the small auditorium listening to the discussions between the two agencies' big brass. I thought we were both there to get checked out in the Agency's "C" model if SAC was to be assigned the responsibility for this mission. Rudy Anderson and Steve Heyser had already been qualified in the "C" model. The dialog became quite heated; in fact, Jerry and I were asked to leave before the discussions continued. I don't know what happened for the remainder of the meeting, but the next day Jerry and I were flown back to our home base at Laughlin AFB along with our contingency [sic] of brass. We arrived late in the evening. The next morning, I went down to the 4028th Operations Squadron and briefed Colonel Des Portes, the Wing Commander, and mission planners on what I had heard and observed at the meeting at North Base. I was surprised to learn that particular contingency had been planned months earlier but had been shelved. There were many secure calls made and our operations and maintenance activity increased dramatically. The end result was that the 4080th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (SRW) had replaced the Agency and had been assigned the reconnaissance program over Cuba.

I was selected, along with several other pilots, to fly the initial recon missions. We all reported to Operations in the early afternoon and received a quick overview and mission update. We were directed to go home and immediately start our required eight hours of crew rest. We were to report back to Operations at 0100 the next morning. I went home, took a sleeping pill and hit the sack. The next morning, I reported to Operations along with the other primary pilots. We started our final briefings. I looked around and it seemed everyone from our Wing was in the briefing room.

After briefings, we went to Physiological Support Division (PSD) for our pre-mission meal, modified physical exam and mission update. The PSD guys helped us get into our pressure suits.[2] It was raining when we started dressing. During our pre-breathing period, I could tell the area was experiencing one of those Texas thunderstorms. The rain came down with greater intensity and the winds, lightning and thunder, had all increased. The weather looked really bad outside. I thought we would never be cleared to takeoff in that sort of weather. The crosswinds and quartering tail wind were way out of limits.[3] Increased thunderstorms continued to pound the area. Much to my surprise, SAC executed the mission. I was transported in our PSD vehicle to my aircraft. The rain and strong wind made it impossible to see more than a couple of feet in front of the van. Strong winds buffeted our vehicle as we drove to the aircraft on the ramp.

The bird I was to fly had slipper tanks installed which contained electronic intelligence collection equipment. It had been spotted on the apron just off Runway 13 (130 degrees). "Great," I thought, "The winds blew from approximately 280 degrees with a quartering tail crosswind, and now were way out of U-2 limits of 24 knots."

I exited the PSD van and walked about 20 feet to the ladder and climbed up into the cockpit. The cockpit looked like it had filled up with water, but it was raining so hard it seemed that wet. I hoped all that water wouldn't short out any of my electronics.

The Mobile Officer looked soaking wet even with a raincoat; I was drenched and everything around us completely saturated as well. The Mobile Officer told me to complete my cockpit check solo so he could close the canopy. I completed my cockpit check and signaled the Mobile Officer that I was ready to start my engine. I looked out the left side of the canopy watching the wind blow sheets of rain across the runway. The entire scenario was unbelievable, and the Mobile Officer was going to launch me into that? Say your prayers, Buddy Boy.

This was a radio-silent mission, so only light signals were used to start, taxi and clear for takeoff. I drove my bird and followed the light for the 50 or so feet I had to taxi to the active runway. Just sitting in the cockpit, I felt the wind buffet my aircraft. The rain still pounded the area. I got a green light, gave the bird full power, released brakes and started my takeoff roll. All during the takeoff, the aircraft buffeted down the runway. I thought, "I hope my pogos drop freely."[4] As soon as I lifted off and established my climb, I set my controls to the Gust position, slowed to turbulent air penetration speed and turned every light in the cockpit to "High."

Lightning around me lit up the sky like daylight, and all the while I bounced around. This roller coaster ride lasted until at about 50,000 feet when I finally broke out into a clear night sky. What a relief! I hoped everyone else made it okay. There were six of us that took off that night, and thankfully, we all returned to Laughlin AFB after the mission. I continued to climb to cruise altitude, and once there,

settled in to start my celestial shots. I had been ordered to recover at McCoy AFB, Florida. After a few hours, I crossed the Gulf of Mexico and picked up my initial coast in point at the western part of Cuba, around Pinar del Rio.

Fifteen minutes before entry, I powered up my "B" configuration camera, set the mode and checked all my systems. When I crossed over into the Cuban land mass, all my camera equipment operated normally. My targets were in the western part of Cuba. The weather that day over the island cooperated and my areas were clear. Tracking and staying on course were a snap; I used the driftsight.[5] There were many checkpoints to verify my exact position. After flying my programmed recon track, I headed back to McCoy AFB. I then exited Cuba and headed north to Florida. Everything was still radio silent. Before I started the descent into McCoy, I was authorized to make my first radio call and requested landing instructions.

The weather at McCoy was great. I entered traffic from the downwind side, turned base onto final and made a full stop landing. Maintenance guys attached the pogos, and Mobile cleared me to taxi and led me to my parking spot. As I taxied in, I observed a lot of activity on the ramp. Several vehicles converged on my bird as I completed my engine shutdown. The ladder rolled up to the cockpit, and I expected a familiar face of the Operations Officer. I was met by SAC Director of Operations, Major General Compton. What a surprise! He welcomed me back, and we exchanged a few words while my "B" configuration camera was offloaded. With that, I had completed my first Cuba mission.

Several more U-2s arrived at McCoy within the next couple of days. The initial cadre of U-2 pilots there with me included Rudy Anderson, Steve Heyser, Jim Qualls, George Bull, Charlie Kern, Jerry McIlmoyle, Pinkie Primrose, Danny Schmarr, Roger Herman and Ed Emerling. Up to this point I had still not been checked out in the Agency "C" model. A few days later, Jim Barnes, one of the Agency pilots and a longtime friend, flew into McCoy in a "C" model and gave me my checkout.

To this day, I don't know how we took off from Laughlin on that historic night with no hung pogos and no aborts. Without a doubt, HE watched over the 4080th Wing that night.

Charles W. Kern

From the time the U-2 entered service with the USAF, it was, with some few notable exceptions, assigned mostly routine missions including air sampling and domestic photography. The month of October 1962 saw an abrupt change to the missions and brought the Dragon Lady to the attention of the world.

Steve Heyser, Rudy Anderson and Jerry McIlmoyle had slipped out of sight for several days. Steve and Rudy flew the first missions over Cuba in "borrowed" CIA U-2s. The photography from these early October flights wrote their names in the history books. The US had confirmation from the photography of the U-2 that Soviet Medium Range Ballistic Missiles (MSRB) were in Cuba.

I first became involved in this action on 16 October 1962. Steve and Rudy were already on location and the rest of us pilots were getting involved. We were still at Laughlin AFB when the mission FRAGORD, slang for Operations Order, arrived and the mission planning area was under heavy security. U-2 launch times were set for 0400 to 0500 to be ready for the photographic targets over Cuba at the best angle of the sun for film exposure. Five aircraft were to be flown. I was assigned as Mobile Control Officer. Rain fell heavily while I pre-flighted each aircraft during pilot hookup and checkout. I don't recall which pilot I launched. The Houdah, an umbrella like apparatus used to shield the pilot from sun and rain, could not begin to keep out all the pouring rain. A series of Texas-sized thunderstorms passed over the Laughlin area and we were all thoroughly soaked. That must have been an omen of the events that were to come.

After the pilot came onboard, I checked on his oxygen and pressure suit connections and meticulously ran the aircraft checklist using our challenge-response method. I completed all the tasks so we could close the canopy and get the pilot out of the rain. The canopy lid was lowered and checking intakes, I gave the pilot the start signal, index finger pointing up and rotating. We operated in complete radio silence. With power unit and air starter running, the pilot signaled inward with thumb to the ground crew. The air blasted into the turbine starter and in seconds, the low whine of the engine could be heard in its starting stages.

Pounding rain, such as I had never seen, lashed us unrelentingly. I put the headlights of the Mobile vehicle directly on the aircraft to aid the ground crew in pulling pins and chocks. I signaled thumbs up to the pilot, clearing him to taxi. The pilot taxied the few feet to the runway and the maintenance crew pulled the pogos to ensure none hung up on takeoff.

I sat in my chase vehicle. The dark, helmeted shape in the cockpit turned in my direction. My vehicle was off his right wing with the dome light on. The wind and rain continued their intensity.

Ten seconds to brake release and the engine speed increased. In seven more seconds, the pilot rammed the throttle forward and disappeared instantly in a cloud of spray, steam, vapor and darkness. I knew he had made it okay when the engine sound, heavily muffled by the continuing downpour, faded evenly and quickly.

I returned to PSD, the team who shoe-horned the pilots into the pressure suits. Other launch officers, like me, were deep in thought, and envied those who had been selected to fly the first missions. None of us had any idea of the unique significance of what was developing in the Caribbean or that we, too, would be packing within hours to join the team at OL-X, the classified designation for McCoy AFB, Florida.

The order came later that night, and we loaded ground crews, operations officers, mission planning navigators, the Mobile Control station wagon and all the remaining pilots on the giant C-124 Globemaster and launched for McCoy. The day finally arrived for the U-2 to show what it, and those flying and supporting the aircraft, could do for the Air Force and for our country. After years of training and uninteresting missions, the Shady Lady, a term of endearment for the bird, was on her way to the adventures for which she had been designed. She would have a permanent place in aviation and diplomatic history. What a thrilling time to be part of Shady Lady's metamorphosis.

After arrival at McCoy, the team was immediately involved in mission planning and flying. There were certainly enough missions to go around with 11 pilots and 10 aircraft. I don't remember specifically what we did in our off-duty time; however, I'm almost certain whatever we did probably included "hoisting a few" at the overcrowded Officers Club. Rudy Anderson was a very serious guy and didn't participate in much of the partying like many of the rest of us. He was scheduled as the standby pilot and as Mobile Control Officer the next day. Two other pilots and I were scheduled to fly photographic collection missions over Cuba. Up to this point, there had not been much apprehension over flying these missions. That attitude changed swiftly and violently.

Early in the morning of 27 October 1962, four of us followed the normal preflight routine: Briefing, physical exam, breakfast of steak and eggs. While pre-breathing 100 percent oxygen for one hour prior

to takeoff, we studied the target folder, and one more time checked the Green Card. The Green Card displayed the navigation log on the front with oxygen and fuel consumption predictions.

Thirty minutes before takeoff, the PSD team shoehorned us into our custom-made pressure suits. The outer garment protected the pressure suit laces from catching on the various switches, knobs and handles in the cockpit. I then strapped on my shoulder holster with my long-time companion, the .357 Magnum. For years I had carried this same gun on missions.

I took a deep breath and held it so no ambient air could enter my lungs. I changed to the walk-around oxygen bottle for a full one hour. The air-conditioned van carried the pilots to the ramp where the already pre-flighted U-2 awaited.

We were met at the aircraft ladder by a calm, softly smiling Rudy Anderson. I climbed up the ladder and into "the office," as the cockpit was known. The PSD guys were doing their thing, snapping and connecting everything in the cockpit. PSD switched me to the aircraft oxygen system. I held my breath while they performed the Quick Disconnect (QD) and safety clipped it. I checked with a firm pull on the connection to ensure it was latched. The lap belt and shoulder harness fastened over the pressure suit and oxygen hoses. We certainly didn't want those hoses in the way during seat separation and ejection if that became an issue. PSD performed a "press to test" and a surge of oxygen inflated all the pressure suit capstans and breathing bladders. Suddenly it was very crowded in that small cockpit. The final check of the face seal determined it properly seated and secured. Finally, a pat on the helmet indicated "all okay" by another great technician of PSD and then turned it over to Rudy. "Click," Rudy connected his headset and mike and switched us to "hot mike" so we could talk while running the checklist. The sharply amplified sounds of my own breathing were heard in the headset. Rudy was Chief of U-2 Flight Standardization; and since I was a FNG (Fairly New Guy), I didn't joke around. Besides, I had to concentrate on the immediate task of getting ready for engine start and launch. We went through the entire checklist, and then went through the last chance recheck of crucial oxygen systems and every connection. Rudy untied the string on the TOP SECRET folder and laid out the proper places, maps, green card, pencils, dividers and plotter. One final scan of the cockpit and Rudy gave another pat on the helmet and clicked off. With the hot mike off, he descended the ladder and I waited for clearance to start the engine. I waited, waited and waited some more.

After an interminably long period, I finally got the signal. The signal was not to start but to get out of the cockpit and stay on oxygen. Somebody "up the line" was trying to decide whether we launched or not. PSD came back up the ladder with a walk-around bottle of oxygen and unhooked me from the aircraft system. I climbed out of the cockpit, down the ladder and to the ramp. After more waiting, I was told Washington had scrubbed the mission. One airplane and one pilot remained ready to go if clearance was received.

In a situation such as that, the Mobile Control Officer was the spare pilot and normally the next to fly. When the mission was scrubbed, I would not fly if it was then rescheduled. With that mission cancelled, Rudy automatically became the next pilot up. Some of us mildly protested, but Rudy prevailed. He reminded us of the unwritten rule and jokingly that he was after all the senior guy.

After changing out of the pressure suit and back into normal flying suit, I went back to the visiting family quarters where we were housed. It was only a short while when Rudy and the new Mobile Control Officer, Ed Emerling, got the call to return to the flight line for what would be Rudy's final mission.

For lack of something better to do, a few of us headed to the on-base golf course. My golf game was lousy and I didn't enjoy it at all. But it did beat sitting around waiting for tomorrow. When I arrived back at the house a couple hours later, I learned that Rudy was missing. The Mobile Officer went back to his position at the flight line to wait for Rudy, should he return. Perhaps, we thought, the aircraft had radio failure or some other problem. The Mobile Officer waited until the time that fuel would have been exhausted, then gave up and returned to the house. The evening became somber, if not sober, watching television news.

We didn't fly for a couple of days and we pilots in the detachment didn't have any idea what was going on regarding our participation in the momentous events unfolding on daylong television news. We received word the Commander in Chief, Strategic Air Command, General Thomas Powers, was flying into McCoy to talk with us pilots. Wow! Must be something huge for "The Man" to come to the detachment.

We speculated that Washington would order surgical air strikes to at least take out the SAM site that bagged Rudy and maybe activate protective ECM (Electronic Countermeasures) to jam the other sites so they couldn't pick us up on their radars. Wrong on both counts. We would begin overflights again but without ECM. Our leaders were not about to compromise the ECM equipment that would have to protect our strategic strike force bombers in case we went to nuclear war. An event like that appeared more likely with each passing moment.

We flew exposed and vulnerable as hell. The next day we went in force, five aircraft flying parallel courses about 20 miles apart, staggered with five-minute separation. Our flight plan carried us directly up the island from the east tip to the west, bending 15 to 20 degrees to follow the curvature of the island. This time we did takeoff and launched in radio silence. I was third in the order and therefore, in the middle flight track. Things went well, and to my left Guantanamo slipped quietly by. The weather was great and I felt good, regardless of uncertainties I had about the enemy below. We felt sure President Kennedy had sent word to Fidel to lay off the U-2s, but we were not at all confident that the directive would be followed.

Suddenly, over the radio in clear text came an alarmed voice: "Green Arrow! Green Arrow! Green Arrow! I repeat Green Arrow, Green Arrow, Green Arrow." I said aloud to myself, "Damn! That sonofabitch is after another one of us." That was the recall signal from the RC-121 monitoring our flights. I racked my airplane into a hard left turn, heading for the nearest shoreline. The airplane shuddered and I eased up a bit and turned 90 degrees. For a few seconds I turned to the right and then back left toward open water. Five or six very long minutes passed and I was out of range of the SAMs. Turning off the cameras, I flew east until clear of Cuba and pointed my bird toward McCoy.

The mission was terminated for that day by the recall. From that point on, the missions ceased being a really fun thing to do. Although this particular mission ended in a recall, there were many more that went textbook.

Our equipment improved, and we became more knowledgeable about the intentions of the enemy. The shrieking of warning systems and the red signal, known as Oscar Sierra (OS) alerted the pilot of the SAM in the guidance mode. Following its launch, it was then locked on to the aircraft. We referred to the OS signal as the "Oh, Shit" light on the right canopy rail. If that signal went on, we were in deep you know what. Now, there's black humor at its best! That signal was definitely not something anyone wanted to hear at 70,000 feet.

The sweat brought about by trepidation of this nature is uniquely different from normal sweat caused by exertion or uncomfortable heat. Trepidation sweat has a singular pungent quality of its own, a particular scent that is unmistakable. It has been many years since my last combat mission over North Vietnam, but the leather pressure suit gloves I wore over Cuba and Vietnam have retained that distinctive scent to this day. Yes, I still have those gloves … somewhere.

Charles 'Chuck' Maultsby

The latter part of September l962 I was notified that I had been tapped for my second tour of Alaska. I didn't look forward to going back that time of year because, unlike summer months when it is daylight 24 hours a day, the winter months are bitter cold and dark almost the entire day. I would much rather have been flying missions out of our Operating Location in Australia. It is summer there during our winter months in the US.

Off I went on a Boeing KC-135 Stratotanker back to Eielson AFB, Fairbanks, Alaska. Lieutenant Colonel Forrest "Whip" Wilson was the Detachment Commander. Captains Don Webster, "Wee" Willie Lawson and I were the U-2 drivers and the three navigators who did our flight planning were Captains Billie Bye, Bob Yates and First Lieutenant Fred Okimoto.[6]

The missions being flown were the same High Altitude Sampling Program (HASP) missions I had flown during my previous tour, with one exception. Don Webster was the first U-2 pilot to fly to the North Pole and back. He covered a distance of 3,000 miles. It was celestial navigation all the way, using the stars for a fix. The only radio beacon used was located at Barter Island, located off the north coast of Alaska. From there, the Pole was nothing but ice caps and polar bears.

"Wee" Willie Lawson was the next U-2 driver to fly to the North Pole. My turn would come later. I sat in on all the flight planning and briefings to be prepared for my own flight. Unlike the other HASP flights, this one was to be accompanied by a Duck Butt flight as far as Barter Island where they would orbit and wait for the U-2's return. Duck Butt was a search and rescue team flying a Douglas DVC-4. If we were forced to bail out between Barter Island and the North Pole, they would make every effort to locate us. We understood the chances of a successful Duck Butt rescue were slim.

The team said if a pilot bailed out over the North Pole, they could make one orbit before heading for the nearest landfall. It was no reason having the para-rescuer suffer the same fate. I asked one of the jumpers what he would do if he had to bail out over the Pole. He said, "I wouldn't pull the ripcord." I was sorry I asked. With that in mind, I wasn't sure why the rescue guys tagged along after I heard that response. They couldn't land on those jagged ice caps. Even if they were lucky enough to find the pilot, by the time a ground party could reach him, he would either be frozen solid or decomposing in the belly of a polar bear.

"Wee" Willie didn't have to worry about either of the two prospects. His flight went according to plan, and he returned with some of the most radioactive material collected to date. The Russians must have popped some mighty potent caps.

On 25 October 1962, Billie Bye, Fred Okimoto, Bob Yates and I planned my flight to the Pole for the following day. The same Duck Butt team sat in on the briefing that followed the flight planning, but I didn't ask them any questions. I already knew their answers and once was enough.

Since my takeoff was scheduled for midnight on 26 October, I tried to get plenty of sleep during the day. It was next to impossible. Throughout the day, people were tromping in and out of the BOQ in their heavy snow boots.[7] The harder I tried to sleep, the more awake I became. I finally gave up and went down to our Operations Building and sacked out on a cot. No one would show up until three hours before my takeoff time.

I woke around 2000 and went to the Officers' Mess for a breakfast of steak and eggs.[8] Bob, Billie and Fred were there too. They didn't have much sleep either.

I suited up in the pressure suit with help from the guys at Physiological Support Division (PSD) and had my one-hour pre-breathing. The preflight preparations were completed. I took off on time and proceeded directly to Barter Island. Duck Butt gave me a call on a prebriefed frequency and said we both should arrive at the same time over Barter Island. They wished me luck and said they would keep a "light in the window" for me.

Over the Barter Island radio beacon, I set course for the Pole and prepared to take the first fix. Right on the button. Those navigators were masters of their craft. All went according to plan until I was about halfway between Barter Island and the Pole. Streaks of light started dancing through the sky making it difficult to take a fix on the star I was shooting. This was my first experience with the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights. It couldn't have occurred at a worse time. The further north I went, the more intense the lights became. I held my heading and hoped the star I thought I saw was the right one.

The last few fixes before reaching the Pole, if in fact I did reach it, were highly suspect. I had no reason to believe I was off course, despite the suspect fixes. I decided to go ahead and do a 90-270 degree left turn that would put me over the Pole. It was: 90-270 degrees turn, then left turn for 90 degrees, then immediately reverse the turn for 270 degrees until heading back along the same track, only in the opposite direction. This new track should have headed me straight for Barter Island. I was out of radio range with Duck Butt. There was not anything they could do, but I would have felt more comfortable hearing a friendly voice now and then.

I had never flown over a landmass that had not a single light from horizon to horizon. Of course, there were no lights on the ice caps, but didn't the Duck Butt crew say they would "leave a light in the window" for me? The first two fixes I took after leaving the Pole were wishful hoping, and I realized something was terribly wrong. I began calling in the clear, hoping somebody out there might hear me and steer me in the right direction. I thought I was on the right track for Barter Island but the Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) was some time away.

It wasn't until I was out from under the Aurora Borealis force that I knew for sure I was off course, but which direction? I didn't bother to attempt to take any more fixes; I would just fly time and distance and hope for the best. I was approximately 300 to 400 miles [482 to 643 kilometres] north of Barter Island, or I thought I was, when the first radio with Duck Butt was completed. I even heard someone in our command post at Eielson calling over the single side band radio, but they couldn't receive my call. Surely I was in range of the radio beacon on Barter Island, but I couldn't pick it up. Had it shut down or what?

As the ETA for Barter Island was down to 30 to 40 minutes, Duck Butt called and said they would start firing flares every five minutes. They started immediately. Duck Butt orbited over Barter Island and reported the radio beacon was operating okay. They received a transmission loud and clear. I didn't see any flares and asked them to fire another one. By this time I should have been over Barter Island and I should have been able to see the flare. They fired another flare

and another. Again I saw nothing. It was all I could do to fight off a panic attack. I was either many miles east or west of Barter Island but which?

The navigator aboard the Duck Butt called and asked me if I could identify a star. I told him I had the Belt of Orion constellation about 15 degrees left of the nose of my aircraft. Several minutes later the navigator called and told me to steer 10 degrees left. Immediately, I received another call from an unknown source, using my call sign, telling me to turn 30 degrees right. What the hell was going on? The navigator in Duck Butt didn't hear the latest call, so I was certain I was miles west of Barter Island. I received a call again from the unknown source with a definite Western-sounding voice telling me to turn right 35 degrees. I challenged him, using a code only a legitimate operator would know, but I received no response.

Duck Butt called and asked me if I could see a glow to the east on the horizon. I replied, "Negative." Transmissions from Duck Butt were getting weaker by the minute and the last one I heard was, "Turn left 15 degrees." The transmissions from the unknown source were loud and clear, but I ignored them. I selected the emergency channel broadcast and shouted: MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY! as loud as I could. I had about 30 minutes of fuel left, with no prospect of landing back at Eielson or anywhere else for that matter. The U-2 carries enough fuel for nine hours and forty minutes of flight, and I had already been airborne nine hours and ten minutes.

Suddenly I picked up a radio station directly off the nose of the aircraft; it sounded like Russian music. It came in loud and clear. Now I knew where I was! The suppressed panic was now real and seized my lungs. I heard my own pulse pound in my ears. Through my panic, I knew for sure I wasn't going to be another Gary Powers and spend time in a Russian prison.

With what little fuel I had left, I decided to get as far away as possible from that radio station. I turned left until it was directly behind me and I kept shouting, "MAYDAY!" until I was hoarse. "Why bother," I thought. "There is nothing anyone can do, so I may as well save my breath."

Twelve minutes of fuel left now. I made a call in the clear to let anyone know who might be listening, that I was going off the air. A sense of despair overwhelmed me. I shut the engine down. Here I was just above 75,000 feet over God-knows-where, encased in a pressure suit which had inflated to keep my blood from boiling and all I could think was, "This is a fine mess you got yourself into, Charlie."

When the suit inflated, I neglected to pull the lanyard to keep the helmet from rising. I had a hell of a time seeing the instrument panel until I finally got my helmet back into position. The windshield and face shield fogged up immediately.

I wanted to conserve the battery so I could make one call before I punched out.[9] I thought for a moment the altimeter was stuck. At least 10 minutes went by before the aircraft started to descend. With my face close to the faceplate, I could lick the condensation off. Now all I had to do was keep the wings level, maintain a rate of descent for maximum range and hope my Guardian Angel wasn't taking a nap. The silence was deafening. I could only hear my own labored breathing.

Up to now Mother Nature hadn't extended an invitation to relieve my bladder, but wouldn't you know, she makes a call at the most inopportune time. I wasn't about to unzip the pressure suit and have my "winky" pinched off during ejection. Besides, I didn't think I could find my "winky" under all the winter gear I was wearing. I felt like a 40-pound robin. I wandered off the heading I had established. It would not have mattered that much, but I still wanted to feel I was in control of an impossible situation.

Twenty minutes passed since flameout. Damned if I didn't see a faint glow on the horizon directly in front of me. I thought I'd hold this heading and rate of descent until I reached 20,000 feet [6,096 metres]. If I'm in an overcast condition, I'd better punch out. I didn't want to meet up with a mountain, if one was in my flight path. If there aren't any clouds, I would descend to 15,000 feet [4,572 metres] and take it from there. I descended through 25,000 [7,620 metres]. There wasn't any cloud cover and my pressure suit started deflating. I thanked God. Now I could look around because it was light enough to see the terrain, which was blanketed in snow.

There were no mountains in sight, but what I did see was breathtaking to me. There were two F-102 fighter jets, one on each of my wings. They were both flying near stall speed and their angle of attack looked dangerously steep. I activated the battery switch and gave them a call on the emergency frequency. They welcomed me home and said they had been following me for the past 15 minutes. They also said I had just passed over a little airstrip about 20 miles back. I told the F-102 driver off my left wing that I was going to make a left turn, so he had better move off. He replied, "No sweat, come on."

When I turned into him, he stalled out and disappeared under my wing. He said, "While I'm down here, I'll look for that little airstrip." As I passed through 10,000 feet [3,048 metres] altitude, I decided to attempt an engine restart. I was still gliding at 160 knots indicated airspeed and didn't have quite the engine RPM for a restart but I tried anyway. Was I ever relieved to hear the J-57 engine come to life!

I descended below 5,000 feet [1,524 metres]. I'm sure the F-102 drivers were getting nervous because I sure was. They were used to setting up a flameout pattern with a high key at 10,000 feet [3,048 metres], but they weren't flying a glider. I reached 1,000 feet [304.8 metres] flying over a truck. I could not detect any crosswind, which was one less thing to worry about. I started a left turn out to sea and the F-102 drivers came unglued. "Bail out! Bail out!" they shouted. I continued my turn on around to low key, lowered the flaps and decided I was getting too much thrust out of the idling J-57. I shut it down. Everything looked good so far. I was coming up on the truck now with more airspeed than I wanted.

As I passed over the truck at about 15 feet, I deployed the drag chute and kicked the rudder back and forth. That took care of the excessive airspeed. The U-2 still didn't seem to want to stop, even without an engine.

Call it luck or help of that Guardian Angel, I think I made the best touchdown ever. I hardly felt a thing as both landing gears settled in one foot of snow. When the U-2 came to a complete stop, I just sat there staring straight ahead. I was physically and emotionally drained.

I don't remember how long I sat there, but a knock on the canopy startled me. I turned to face a bearded giant who was grinning from ear to ear. He reminded me of the television character Grizzly Adams. I breathed a sigh of relief; he wore a parka that I recognized as US Government Issue.

Before I opened the canopy, I unbuckled the seat belt and shoulder harness, made sure all switches were off and stowed the maps that had been useless to me. I took off the faceplate and sucked in a breath of real air.

I then opened the canopy and the bearded giant said, "Welcome to Kotzebue."

I replied, "You don't know how glad I am to be here."

It was bitter cold as I tried to climb out of the cockpit with all my heavy flight gear. My legs were numb and I didn't think they would support my weight. My new-found friend sensed the difficulty I was having, and he put his hands under my armpits and gently lifted me

out of the cockpit and put me on the snow as if I was a rag doll. He wasn't even standing on a ladder or box!

There were several more personnel from the radar station who gathered around, plus a half dozen Eskimos who came from the shacks I saw while airborne. Grizzly gave me a hand taking off the helmet and had someone place it in the vehicle the rescuers drove. The two F-102s buzzed us rocking their wings, then headed east. I thought, "I have to thank them somehow for making this landing possible."

My bladder was about to burst so I excused myself and shuffled to the other side of the aircraft. The Eskimos followed me, but when they saw what I was about to do, they politely turned their heads. More people showed up to look at the strange bird until there were about 20 or so gathered to see and hear the ruckus. I never before in my life had such a large audience to watch me tinkle.

The radar site commander let me use a secure phone in his office and brought me a mug of hot coffee to sip on. I finally contacted "Whip" Wilson. He had been standing by the radio since I took off. I told him the aircraft was okay, no damage done, but the fuel tanks were dry. He said a C-47 was loading up right then with drums of fuel and maintenance people. Whip said he would be along to fly the U-2 back to Eielson. I asked if anyone had notified Jeanne, my wife, that I was overdue and he said no one had. Good to hear. At least she wouldn't know a thing until I told her. Whip let me know that my little excursion over Russia sure had the White House and SAC Headquarters shook up. I thought, "I'll bet."

It took several hours before the C-47 landed at Kotzebue. I had time to unwind and get acquainted with the radar site personnel. The site commander asked if I would like to see where I had been. He took me to a room with the largest plotting screen I had ever seen. There was a map about 15 feet square of the polar region including Alaska and Siberia overlaid with Plexiglass. He flipped a switch and a battery of lights illuminated the entire screen. There was my entire flight from start to finish, indicated by little tick marks made with a yellow grease pencil. The tick marks traced a path from Eielson direct to Barter Island, then to the North Pole. A 90 degree turn over the Pole was indicated, but instead of a 270 degree turn in the opposite direction, it looked like I turned 300 or 310 degrees before rolling out and heading for Siberia. At this point, I was beginning to understand my flight path. I followed the tick marks where the Duck Butt navigator told me to steer 10 degrees left and later 15 degrees left. The tick marks made a sharp left turn and headed for Kotzebue. I was about to slug the radar site commander and wanted to ask him, "Why in hell hadn't I been given a steer when all along you knew where I was." Then my attention was directed to six little tick marks on either side of my flight path as I changed course to Kotzebue.

I asked the commander, "What are those little curly cues?" He replied, "Six MiGs were nipping up trying to shoot you down." Well, that got my attention and I thought, "Oh, shit!" I'm glad I didn't know it at the time.

I stumbled over to a chair and took the weight off. I feared my legs were about to give out. He pulled up a chair alongside mine and said, "I know what you are thinking, and I don't blame you. There is a good reason why we couldn't help you. I can't tell you, but maybe someone higher up will."

I said, "Gee thanks. I hope the reason justifies throwing away an aircraft and crew."

I was still digesting all that I learned when the phone rang and someone in another room said it was for the U-2 pilot. The call was from one of the F-102 pilots stationed at Galena AFB who escorted me to Kotzebue. He said he was glad to see that I had made it down safely and apologized for yelling "Bail out" when I turned out to sea at 1,000 feet. He had never seen a U-2 before and couldn't believe one could glide like that. I invited him to come visit us at Eielson and we would give him a "cook's tour."

The C-47 finally arrived from Eielson with Lieutenant Colonel "Whip" Wilson, several maintenance guys and enough fuel to get the U-2 back to Eielson. When Wilson checked the aircraft forms, he noticed I neglected to fill out my takeoff and landing times. I remembered my takeoff time at midnight but couldn't remember when I landed. The radar site had me logged down at 2225, 10 hours and 25 minutes of flight time. The U-2 had only nine hours and forty minutes of fuel. That meant I had 45 minutes of glide time. There was that Guardian Angel again.

Wilson took off in the U-2, and I climbed aboard the C-47 with the maintenance crew for the long haul back to Eielson. "Wee" Willie met the C-47 and told me I had 30 minutes to pack all my gear because there was a KC-135 waiting to fly me to SAC Headquarters at Offutt AFB at Omaha, Nebraska. I was to brief my flight to the Commander in Chief, Strategic Air Command, General Thomas Powers and his staff, especially the part over Russia. He also told me that Major Rudolph Anderson had been shot down over Cuba that day by a SA-2 surface-to-air missile. That was depressing news on top of everything else I had recently experienced. Everyone who knew Rudy would sorely miss him, myself included.

I don't remember how long the flight to Offutt took, but it couldn't have been long enough to suit me. I was anxious to meet General Powers. I was the only passenger aboard the KC-135 and that made me extremely nervous about the briefing I was to give at SAC Headquarters. General Powers must have deemed it crucial to learn the circumstances surrounding my overflight of Russia. He must know all the details by now, but I supposed he wanted to hear it directly from me.

The KC-135 flight crew was curious to learn why they were flying me to SAC Headquarters, but they never came out and asked. They had probably been briefed not to discuss the reason for this flight with anyone, especially me. They did provide that hot meal I hoped for back in Eielson.

We landed at Offutt and a staff car took me to the headquarters building. A full colonel met me and escorted me to the underground Command Post. The room buzzed like a beehive full of activity. People actually ran from place to place, as if their lives depended on it. Adjacent to the Command Post was a briefing room with a table that could seat 20 people. At the head of the table was an easel with an aeronautical chart on which my flight was plotted to the North Pole. A sheet of paper covered the portion of my flight after leaving the Pole. A colonel told me to be seated and that General Powers would be with us in a few minutes. When General Powers entered the room, eight other generals trailed behind. Those ranking generals looked as if they hadn't been out of their uniforms for days. Their eyes were bloodshot and some hadn't seen a razor in the past 24 or more hours. I stood at attention while they were all seated. General Powers sat directly across the table from me. He looked extremely tired, but he was clean-shaven and wore a fresh uniform.

As soon as everyone was seated, with all eyes riveted on me, General Powers opened the briefing, "Captain Maultsby, how about briefing us on your flight yesterday." I stood at the easel while describing the mission I had flown from Eielson to the North Pole. I mentioned the difficulty I had taking fixes because of the Aurora Borealis."

Until I pointed to the North Pole, no one stopped me to ask questions. General Powers then asked, "Captain Maultsby, do you

know where you went after leaving the Pole?" I answered, "Yes, sir." The other generals squirmed in their seats as if they were sitting on tacks. General Powers said, "Show us, please." I took the pointer and lifted the paper that had covered my flight path after leaving the Pole. The other generals really became excited now, but General Powers only smiled. He asked, "How did you know?" I told him that I saw my flight path plotted at the radar site at Kotzebue. General Powers turned and looked to each of the other generals and asked, "Gentlemen, do you have any more questions?" They all shook their heads negatively. He turned back to me and said, "Too bad you weren't configured with a system to gather electromagnetic radiation. The Russians probably had every radar and ICBM site on maximum alert."

General Powers thanked me for the briefing, told me not to discuss my overflight with anyone and left the room. The other generals trailed behind him in order of rank, and the last to leave the room was a brigadier general. He stopped in front of me and said, "You are a lucky little devil. I've seen General Powers chew up and spit out pilots for a hellava lot less."

The colonel who escorted me into the Command Post asked me if I'd like to wait in his office. He said there was a Cessna U-3A flying up from Laughlin AFB to fly me back. It wasn't due for another hour or so. I thought now would be a good time to find out why I wasn't given a steer when every Tom, Dick and Harry had my flight path plotted. The colonel wouldn't tell me why, but he did say that my overflight came close to starting World War III. If it hadn't been for my "MAYDAY" calls, the Russians may have pulled the trigger on me. He told me that when President Kennedy was informed about my overflight, he simply said, "There's always some son of a bitch who doesn't get the word." Well, if I had received "the word," I wouldn't be sitting here now. Just one steer would have prevented all this commotion.

A phone call from Base Operations announced the arrival of the Cessna from Laughlin. I thanked the colonel and departed the underground still wondering why I wasn't given a steer. It bugged me for years before I learned the reason.

Captain Ed Purdue was waiting for me in the flight planning room at Base Operations. He said everyone back at Laughlin had been sweating for me. Ed didn't think anyone had told Jeanne and I was thankful. He was anxious to hear all about my fiasco, but when I told him General Powers told me not to discuss the flight with anyone, he didn't pursue the issue.

Ed said that he flew through some pretty nasty weather on his way to Offutt and hoped it had cleared for the return flight. The weather station forecast wasn't optimistic. Just north of Enid, Oklahoma, we ran into icing conditions and couldn't maintain altitude. We called Vance AFB near Enid, told them we were icing up and requesting immediate landing instructions. To make matters worse, one engine was losing power which increased our rate of descent. We requested a straight in Ground Control Approach (GCA) and declared an emergency. When the GCA picked us up, we were already below the glide path and still descending. I thought, "What a way to go and after all I'd been through in the past two days." GCA was screaming for us to level off; we were way below the glide path. I could see the ground now through light fog and was certain we wouldn't make it up to the runway. I swear Ed was trying to hold the airplane up by pulling up on the yoke. It worked because we touched down in the overrun 50 feet [15.2 metres] from the runway.

I arrived back at Laughlin and recited the same briefing for my Wing Commander, General DesPortes and his staff. Not one word was spoken throughout the entire briefing, except for an occasional muttered, "Oh, shit," when I described the six MiGs after my fanny. No one asked a question until I finished. Everyone seemed more interested in the thoughts that went through my mind during the ordeal rather than the cause of the overflight. They all were glad not to have been in my place. General DesPortes thanked me and said, "Now get back to Jeanne and the boys and take the next couple days off."

Jeanne met me at the door with a "cool one" and said, "After you change your clothes, I'm dying to know what all the commotion was about. Just tell me one thing with a quick "yes" or "no;" does it have anything to do with Rudy Anderson being shot down?" I replied that it did not, "However, if the boys come in, I'll have to wait to full you in on my latest escapade."

Jeanne sat attentively, her huge eyes looking larger as I went through the events of the past three days. "Well, that's it. Now you know what all the commotion was about." She just shook her head and said, "I let you out of my sight and you try to start World War III!" Before she could say another word, Chuckie and Shawn came bursting through the door shouting, "What did you bring me?" I felt like saying, "I brought your Daddy's ass home in one piece."

SAC Headquarters sent a team of navigators down to Laughlin to get a look at the article known as the U-2. Some had never seen a U-2 much less the navigation aids it carried including a periscope sextant and coffee grinder.[10] The team was led by a full colonel who, when introduced to me, said he remembered my name associated with another incident but he couldn't put his finger on it. I was chosen to escort the team because they were aware of my overflight. I let them sit in the cockpit of the U-2 and explained what the instruments were and how they were used. I could tell they were disappointed in what they saw. They were expecting all sorts of sophisticated equipment. After they observed the flight planning for several days and the results of some local flights, they all agreed a U-2 pilot certainly earned his flight pay.

Many years later at Davis Monthan AFB, Tucson, Arizona, I received a call from a major inquiring if I was the same Maultsby who landed a U-2 at Kotzebue back in 1962. I told him that I was, and I invited him to visit the squadron first chance he had. I didn't really expect him to accept.

Weeks went by before the major showed up at the door of my office. We spent about an hour recalling the events that took place in those famous days on 26 and 27 October 1962. He wasn't the radar site commander at Kotzebue back then, but I certainly did remember meeting him. Just as a lark, I thought I'd ask him why I wasn't given a steer, since my flight path had been plotted from start to finish. He was surprised that no one ever told me although I had made several inquiries. He didn't go into detail how my positions were relayed to the radar site, but he did mention some satellite station off the coast of Siberia on an island that could relay the information without giving their position away. Apparently, Uncle Sam regarded the satellite stations more important than one lost U-2 aircraft and the pilot.

That explanation never satisfied me. Kotzebue could have contacted Duck Butt and they could have given me a steer before I wandered out of radio range.

Colonel (Ret.) Anthony Martinez

On the evening of 13 October 1962, Major General K. K. Compton and Brigadier General Robert Smith, SAC Deputy Chief of Staff Intelligence, arrived at Laughlin AFB in General Powers' own Embraer VC-97 Brasilia. The purpose of their arrival was to transport Colonel Des Portes and those of us on the recovery team

(Operations, Maintenance and Physiological Support) for Steve's arrival the next day at McCoy. Upon arrival at McCoy, we took over the CIA's operation of all pilot facilities except the Communications Room. It was obvious that we were not welcome there, but we had our jobs to do which we managed to complete.

We later learned that Mr. Cunningham, the CIA Operations Supervisor, had been sending communications to his boss about the Air Force operations. His reports were full of negative information indicating the Air Force people were not doing the job properly. He reported that we were forgetting to remove the covers from the camera windows, our pilots were sweaty and showed fear as they suited up. All his allegations were completely false. However, it was definitely a sporty few days there.

I have talked with Leon Schmutz, the F-102 pilot who was the wingman of Captain Dean Rands. It was Rands who intercepted and escorted Chuck Maultsby to Kotzebue on 27 October 1962. Schmutz said he and Rands were on alert at Galena with their Deuces (F-102s) and armed with only air-to-air missiles. They were scrambled to the west to intercept the U-2 that had been tracked over Soviet territory. The Deuces were controlled by CAMPION, the Early Warning Radar site near Galena, Alaska. About 30 to 40 minutes after their takeoff, they were vectored to the U-2 target. The U-2 was intercepted at an altitude of 45,000 feet to 50,000 feet [13,710 to 15,240 metres]. Rands, the flight leader, made radio contact with the U-2 pilot. They continued to escort him toward Alaska, but it was slow going. They had to do some turning to stay with him. All this time they were under control of CAMPION. Rands said he and Schmutz were not aware that MiGs were airborne and were attempting to intercept the U-2. He said he did not know exactly where the MiGs were when they intercepted Maultsby's U-2. But if you measure 40 minutes flying time at 400 to 500 knots west of Galena, it places you over or near the Siberian land mass. Kotzebue is on the north end of the Alaskan Baldwin Peninsula and there is nothing west of that but open water of the Chukchi Sea. Maultsby was blessed by many fortunate events that happened that day leading up to his successful landing.

Gerald E. (Jerry) McIlmoyle

The Cuban Missile Crisis began for Rudy Anderson, Steve Heyser, Buddy Brown and me on 11 October 1962. Our Wing Commander, Colonel John DesPortes, came to each of our homes at Laughlin AFB. When he made a house call, we knew something extremely urgent was going down. The colonel told us to pack our bags; we were headed to Edwards AFB, California. The plan was for us to take over the CIA's three U-2s.

Director of Operations, Strategic Air Command, Major General K. K. Compton, accompanied us on the aircraft to Edwards. En route he informed us that President Kennedy had directed the CIA U-2s to be turned over to the Air Force, and the USAF was directed to conduct photographic reconnaissance over Cuba. General Compton also told us that the President was still unhappy with the CIA's failure of the Bay of Pigs Operation the year before and he wanted the military to take over this Cuban mission.

CIA pilots instructed us in the differences between the Air Force and CIA U-2s. The next day Agency pilots Barry Baker and James Barnes conducted the ground school at Edwards AFB North Base. Both Barnes and Baker had been in my squadron at Great Falls, Montana before joining the CIA. They were obviously unhappy about being directed to give up their planes to us.

One major difference of the CIA U-2 and the Air Force version was the J-75 engine which enabled the CIA pilots to fly about 2,000 feet higher than the AF with their J-57 engine. Their birds also had a strobe display about the size of a tennis ball on top of the instrument panel. The strobe display indicated direction and distance of any Cuban radar in operation. Lethal range of the SA-2 surface to air missile was 25 miles from the launch site.

The CIA planes also had an aural signal in the headset that sounded a warning when a surface to air missile went into its final radio guidance mode. It was a fluttery sound, called a fan song after the metallic sound of a paper hand fan used by women in the non-airconditioned church of my youth.[11] The sound was soft but menacing. If the signal was heard, the pilot was to initiate a 30-degree bank turn and do an "S" maneuver back to the flight path and by then out of range of the missile launch site. The SA-2 could not turn with the U-2 at altitudes of 70,000 to 75,000 feet [21,336 to 22,860 metres], the altitude we maintained en route to Cuba. To fly at that altitude, we flew short fuel and film loads. Each pound of fuel equals one foot in altitude. If we carried 300 or fewer gallons of fuel, we could increase altitude by 2,000 feet [600 metres]. Another nice feature of the CIA U-2s was the thrust diffuser to spread and shield the jet engine exhaust from infrared homing sensors and prevent a heat-seeking device to guide a missile into the aircraft.

On 14 October, Steve Heyser took off from Edwards and flew the first overflight of Cuba. His mission ended when he landed at McCoy AFB, Florida. Steve's film was immediately offloaded and flown to Washington, DC for processing. President Kennedy was briefed later that day on the photographic evidence of Soviet Medium Range Nuclear missiles installed in Cuba. The remaining two CIA U-2s were ferried to McCoy by the CIA pilots. Rudy Anderson deployed to McCoy and Buddy and I returned to Laughlin from where we flew our first overflights of Cuba. Buddy and I recovered to McCoy after those flights. By 17 October 1962, we had 11 U-2 pilots and 10 U-2 aircraft at McCoy. During those first days, we flew about five overflights of Cuba each day.

On 25 October, the Soviets made their first attempt to shoot down my U-2 with two SA-2 missiles launched near Banes, Cuba. I received no signal from any of the warning systems. I wasn't even aware that I had been fired at until I saw the missile contrails in my rear-view mirror. It was a gorgeous clear day with dark blue sky above and a blue-green sea below. Those contrails were quite a contrast. I was in my turn north when I looked back over my left wing and spotted the missile condensation trails that went all the way back to the ground pointing to the Banes SA-2 site. I continued my turn to set up the cameras to record the contrails and burst clouds from the missile. I turned back to the right so the left wing was raised and the cameras began to record. For the next couple minutes, I continued taking pictures of the whole scene.

Two days later, our Operations Officer, Tony Martinez, held a pilots' meeting to discuss the SAM and MiG-21 threats and our tactics to evade them. It was real to us now. We all knew the Soviet threat we faced, and we realized we probably would not receive any warning of intercept attempts. Tony also stated the need to have a pilot standing by each day in case we were directed to fly more overflights than were scheduled. The increase in overflights had occurred several times previously. Rudy volunteered for the standby alert pilot duty for the next day. From then on, we were directed to rotate the duty through our cadre.

We had three overflights scheduled for 27 October with Rudy as standby alert pilot. The three flights had taken off earlier to be over the target with the sun at the best angle for good photography. It was a bright clear day, and the sky was a beautiful dark blue. Steve Heyser and I had not been scheduled to fly so we went out to play

golf. Golf was our recreation as we could not fly for two days before another flight.

At about 1100 from where we were on the golf course, Steve and I heard the unique sound of a U-2 taking off. We turned to see the bird climbing out at a steep angle. The plane was silhouetted against the blue sky, and we watched until it was out of sight. We both knew that it was Rudy going on a special mission, and we silently prayed he would return safely.

Rudy's mission covered the area near Banes, Cuba, a known location of the almost-finished Medium Range Ballistic Missile (MRBM) launch complex with a defending SAM site. The US radar site at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba reported they lost their track of Rudy at a time and location when he should have been on his photographic run over the target.

We never knew exactly what happened, but I believe that Rudy had no system warning of the intercept. He was known to fly with intense concentration and dedication. I believe he was totally focused on flying the most stable platform to gather the best possible photographic intelligence.

On that day, 27 October 1962, after Rudy's shootdown, the Soviets capitulated and agreed to remove their nuclear tipped MRBMs from Cuba and cease construction of their associated launch sites. The Cuban Missile Crisis was over.

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ENDNOTES

Chapter 1

1. The Central Committee of the Communist Party, in a meeting with Nikita Khrushchev, approved this plan.
2. For a fuller account of the blockade of Berlin and the Allied airlift, see Volume 1 of *Cold War Berlin; An Island City* in Helion's Europe@War series.
3. For a fuller account of the shooting down of Powers' U-2 from the Soviet perspective, see *Hunt for the U-2* in Helion's Europe@ War series.
4. The Organization of American States is a regional forum for political discussion, policy analysis and decision making for affairs in the Western Hemisphere.

Chapter 2

1. General Maxwell Taylor served in the Second World War and later served as Chief of Staff of the Army. On 1 October 1962 he became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
2. The 26th of July Movement was a revolutionary group led by Fidel Castro in 1953 on the army barracks at Santiago de Cuba. The goal of the organisation was to initiate an operation to overthrow the dictator Fulgencio Batista.
3. Admiral Rybalko would not be joining his forces on the journey to Cuba.
4. The ship was named for Vladimir Lenin's mother or sister. Both were named Maria.
5. At least seven Russian ships were named *Poltava*.
6. Rodion Cantacuzene was born 22 October 1928 in Chicago, Illinois to Clarissa Curtis and Prince Mikhail Catacuzene, 3rd Count Speransky. Prince Mikhail was born 29 April 1875 in Poltava, Ukraine and served as a general in the Russian military forces.
7. Anti-submarine screens are formed for the purpose of preventing submarines from gaining a position either on the surface or submerged from which they can attack the ships being screened. This can best be accomplished by detecting, attacking and destroying any submarine attempting to gain such an attack position.
8. Condition One indicated a high state of readiness ready to engage the enemy.
9. Sonar is a system designed to detect objects in water (usually but not exclusively under the water, such as submarines). Passive sonar listens for sounds generated by the target object, while active sonar transmits sound signals and listens for the retuning echoes. Water is an effective medium for the transmission of sound and therefore sound is a much more efficient basis for a detection system than, for example, visible light or radio/radar signals.
10. A sound-powered telephone allows users to talk to each other with the use of a handset similar to a conventional telephone but without use of external power.
11. Diesel-powered submarines use batteries to propel the submarine while it is submerged. In order to charge the batteries however the submarine must use its diesel engines and must raise a snorkel to the surface to allow air in and diesel fumes out.
12. One fathom is equal to 6 feet (1.8288 metres).
13. In addition to the instances related herein, *From Julietts to Yasens* in Helion's Europe@War series details the development of the Soviet SSGN-type submarines and a number of incidents and accidents that befell such vessels.
14. The idea of showing the missile launch from under the sea had been to appear to match the capabilities of USS *George Washington*.
15. The events aboard K-19 were dramatized in the 2002 film *K-19: The Widowmaker*.

Chapter 3

1. In preparation for a U-2 flight, pilots spent one hour pre-breathing oxygen. The pre-breathing oxygen helped purge nitrogen from the body.
2. The Sargasso Sea is within the Northern Atlantic Subtropical current.
3. In meetings with the Soviets throughout the crisis, the US representatives used the terms 'offensive weapons' in Cuba. The Soviets denied the use of 'offensive' weapons and questioned several times the US representatives' use of the term.
4. Tojo Hideki was the Japanese general who supported the attack on the United States at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on 7 December 1941.
5. The parade commemorated the revolution of October 1917 according to the Gregorian calendar, a date occurring in November according to the Julian calendar.
6. The missiles in Turkey and Italy were already considered outdated technology.

Chapter 4

1. Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) are a British Overseas Territory, southeast of the Bahamas chain and north of Haiti. TCI sits approximately 400 miles (643 kilometres) from the northeast coast of Cuba.
2. 'Missing personnel' refers to those sailors who missed the departure time of the ship in port.
3. Award presented annually by the CNO to one ship in the Atlantic Fleet and one ship in the Pacific Fleet.
4. An oiler referred to a naval ship with fuel tanks that could refuel ships while underway.
5. CNO Flag Plot is the admiral's tactical and navigational control room aboard a flagship.
6. John Paul Jones was an American naval hero during the American Revolution.

Chapter 5

1. Soviet sources recently indicated that the Kremlin had not authorised and did not know of Formin's diplomatic approach to the Kennedy Administration.
2. USS *Joseph P. Kennedy* was named for the President's brother, a Navy pilot killed in the Second World War.
3. A whaleboat is a small open boat with oars, crewed by up to 10 sailors.
4. The Navy had developed a system for keeping track of the submarines identified. The system assigned a letter and number for each vessel spotted.
5. Bird farm is Navy slang for an aircraft carrier.

Chapter 6

1. The USAF awarded Major Rudolph Anderson the first Air Force Cross, the second highest military honour for valour.
2. Historians learned recently that Moscow had not ordered the shooting down of Anderson's U-2. The orders were given by local Soviet commanders in Cuba.
3. Captain Charles 'Chuck' Maultsby flew his U-2 on an air sampling mission over the Artic on 25 October 1962 and strayed into Soviet territory where he was targeted by MiGs.
4. HMS *Resolute* was a British ship abandoned in Arctic waters in 1854. The ship was recovered by the US and, following repairs, returned to Britain. When the ship was decommissioned and broken up some of its timbers were used to fashion a desk which was presented by Queen Victoria to the then US president. It is one of a number of desks that have been used by US presidents in the Oval Office.

Chapter 7

1. Trunk on a submarine is a vertical space with access to egress through hatches.
2. Deep bodies of water can consist of many layers of different temperatures and degrees of salinity and these can have a very significant effect on the propagation of sonar signals, with some layers being essentially transparent to sonar while others reflect the signals, thus sometimes aiding the submariner, and sometimes aiding the would-be sub-hunter.
3. The baffles are the area in the water directly behind a ship churned up by its own propellers and motion, through which a hull-mounted sonar cannot hear and thus detect a submarine.
4. The Tracker carried a sensor known as a Magnetic Anomaly Detector (MAD), this was able to detect disturbances in the Earth's magnetic field caused by the presence of a large metallic body (i.e. a submarine). While the sensor was not particularly accurate in terms of range and bearing to the source of the disturbance, it was very short ranged, meaning that if the sensor registered a metallic body it must be very nearby, probably no more than a nautical mile (2,000 yards).
5. When B-59 returned to Russia, the crew faced disgrace and humiliation from senior officers. One admiral even said, 'It would have been better if you had gone down with your ship.' When Marshal Andrei Grechko learned of the crew's failure to follow strict orders of secrecy after he the submarine had been discovered by the US Navy, he became enraged. It was only then he learned it was the diesel submarines sent to Cuba.
6. Military term for bathroom.
7. Flank as used here refers to 'flank speed' in which the ship uses all available speed to conduct an emergency manoeuvre. Such speed is reserved for emergency use as it can cause damage to the ship's machinery and cannot be sustained for extended periods.
8. A Variable Depth Sonar (VDS) is a sonar sensor attached to the end of a cable and can be lowered or raised in the water as a means of overcoming some of the difficulties associated with the differing temperatures and levels of salinity in large bodies of water. A VDS is usually an active sonar system that transmits sonar signals.
9. Retired USAF 4080th SRW Crew Chief Joe Warner shared this memory with the author.
10. This is a process to provide cleaner air through the system.

Chapter 9

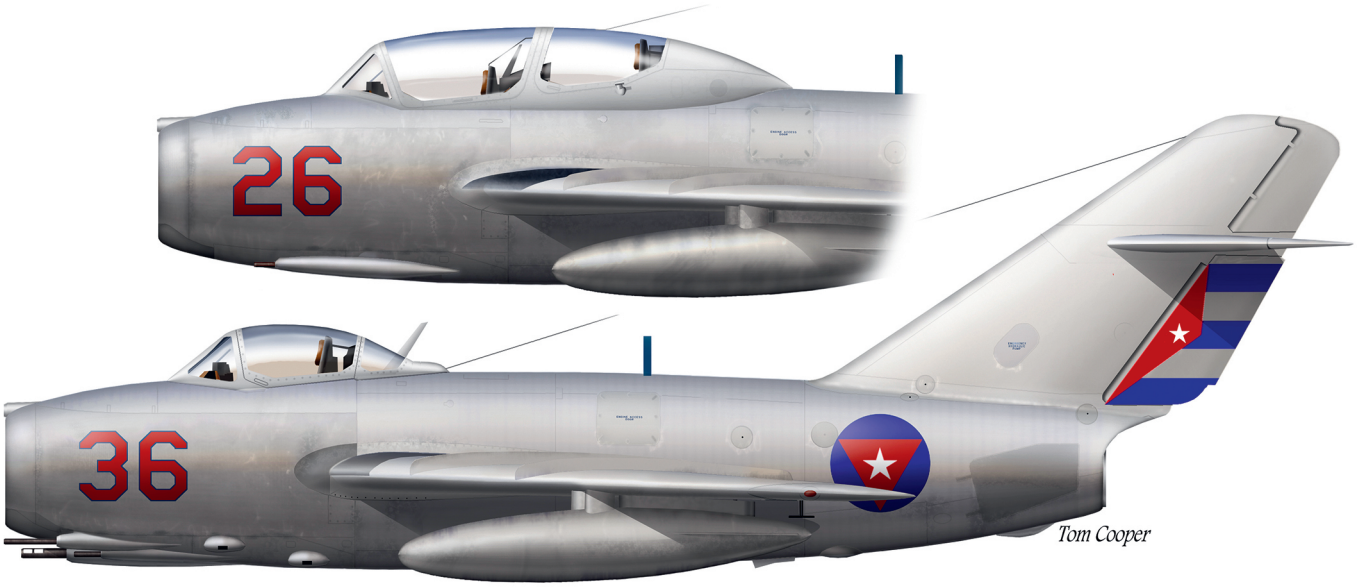
1. The men on the planning team to return the Brigade prisoners back to the US were dedicated to their mission. All had volunteered to put their lives on hold while working on the operation.
2. The mercy ship *African Pilot* was loaned to the Red Cross by the Committee of American Steamship Line to transport supplies to Cuba as part of the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis. The ship was retired after the mission to Cuba.

Appendix

1. Brass refers to high-ranking officers.
2. The pressure suit is worn by pilots who may fly at altitudes where air pressure is too low, even while breathing pure oxygen. Pressure suits may be either full pressure or partial depending on the flight requirements.
3. A wind blowing obliquely to a specific direction is called a quartering tail wind.
4. Pogos was a nickname for the removable outriggers to hold the wings level for takeoff and landing. When the aircraft rotated for takeoff, the pogos fell off and were collected by the ground crew who reinstalled them when the aircraft touched down for landing.
5. Driftsight was a bombsight developed in 1916 using a mechanical device to measure wind speed
6. 'Driver' is a term pilots frequently use among themselves that denotes their position as a pilot.
7. BOQ stood for Bachelor Officers Quarters.
8. The breakfast of steak and eggs was a traditional meal pilots ate before their flights which had enough protein to sustain them on the long flight.
9. 'Punch out' meant to eject from the aircraft.
10. The reference to the coffee grinder was a lighthearted indication meaning the U-2 had a huge number of instruments onboard.
11. Guidance radars for the SA-2 missile system were also known by the NATO reporting name 'Fan Song'.

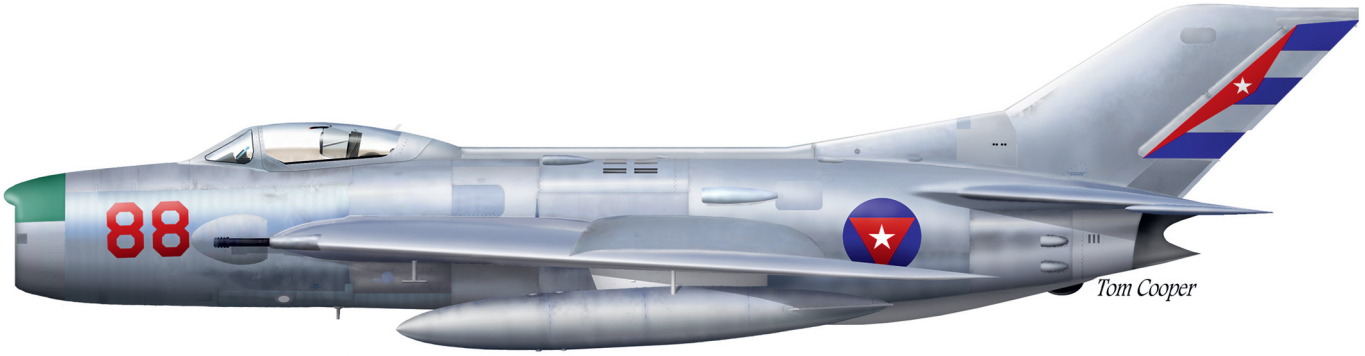
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A native of Texas, Linda Rios Bromley was born in Del Rio. She retired from the U. S. Government in 1997, after being employed in various occupations during her 33 years Civil Service career, in which she worked in various locations, including the Laughlin AFB, Charleston Naval Base, United States Air Force Headquarters Europe, in Wiesbaden, Germany, the National Air and Space Administration, and the Internal Revenue Service in Houston. She has previously written *Flight of the Dragon*, detailing the story of Chang-di 'Robin' Yeh, a Taiwanese pilot of a Lockheed U-2 reconnaissance aircraft, and *Remembering the Dragon Lady*, first-person memoirs of many of the pilots, specialists, and family members who supported the early US spy plane projects.

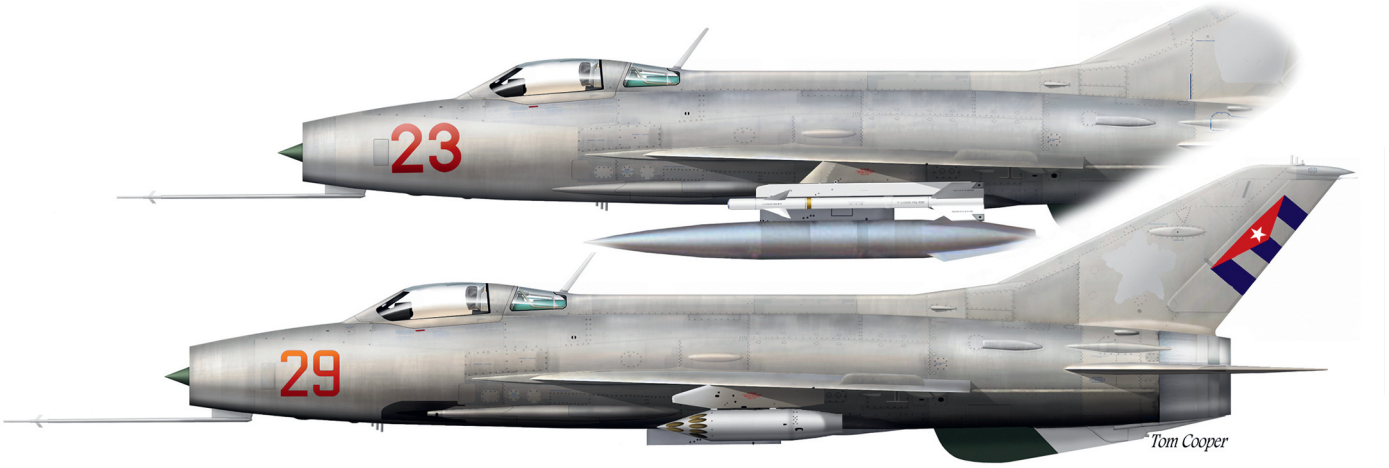


Aiming to re-equip his armed forces, Castro reached a secret arms deal with Moscow in 1960. Amongst the first Soviet aircraft acquired by Cuba was a total of 36 MiG-15bis jet fighters: by 1963, these were reinforced with 10 MiG-15UTI two-seat conversion trainers (front fuselage and cockpit shown inset). Drawn from surplus stocks of the Soviet air force and refurbished before delivery, all were adapted for drop tanks taken from MiG-17s, and painted in two layers of clear lacquer, mixed with 10 percent and 5 percent aluminium powder, respectively – overall (the resulting colour was colloquially known as 'silver grey'). Their IFF antennas and most of the maintenance stencils were applied in blue (the shade is now often referred to as 'email' blue): they wore two-digit bort numbers in red (outlined in black or blue), and roundels in six positions. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)

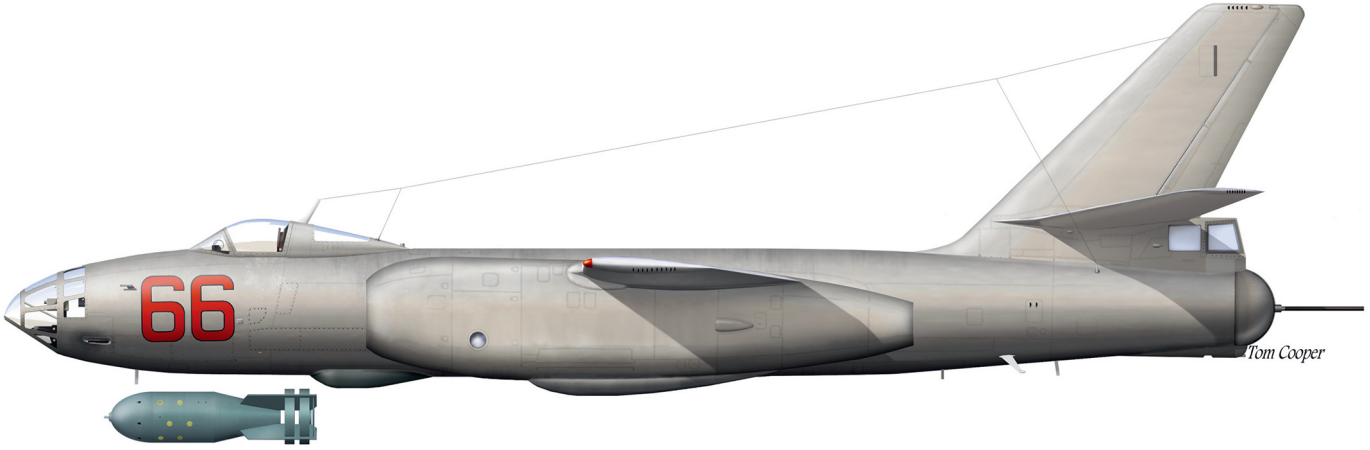
The next Soviet-made fighter jet to reach Cuba was the MiG-17AS: between 12 and 18 were delivered in 1962. Although wired to carry S-3R infrared homing air-to-air missiles (ASCC/NATO reporting name 'AA-2 Atoll') they were used to bolster the MiG-15 unit, the primary task of which was ground attack. As far as is known, their livery and markings were almost exactly like those of the MiG-15bis, but only three-digit bort numbers are known. On 8 September 1962, a pair of Cuban MiG-17 became involved in the first incident of the Cuban Missile Crisis, when they intercepted a pair of Grumman S2Fs of the US Navy about 45 miles southwest of NAS Key West. At least one of the Cuban jets made a simulated firing pass before being driven away by a pair of Douglas F4D-1 Skyray interceptors. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



In June 1961, Moscow delivered a batch of nine MiG-19P (ASCC/NATO reporting name 'Farmer-B') all-weather interceptors to Cuba (known bort numbers were from 82 to 89). They were equipped with the RP-1 Izumrud radar, and armed with two NR-30 guns installed in the wing roots, but carried no air-to-air missiles. Due to the lack of qualified personnel, they were assembled only in the autumn of 1962 and made their first flights in November, painted and marked in the same fashion as the MiG-15s and MiG-17s. Although previously overhauled, like all Soviet-made MiG-19s they suffered from poor technical reliability: three crashed in a matter of days, including one piloted by a Soviet instructor, who was killed. The surviving jets were subsequently stored and a few years later replaced by radar-equipped MiG-21PFMs. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)

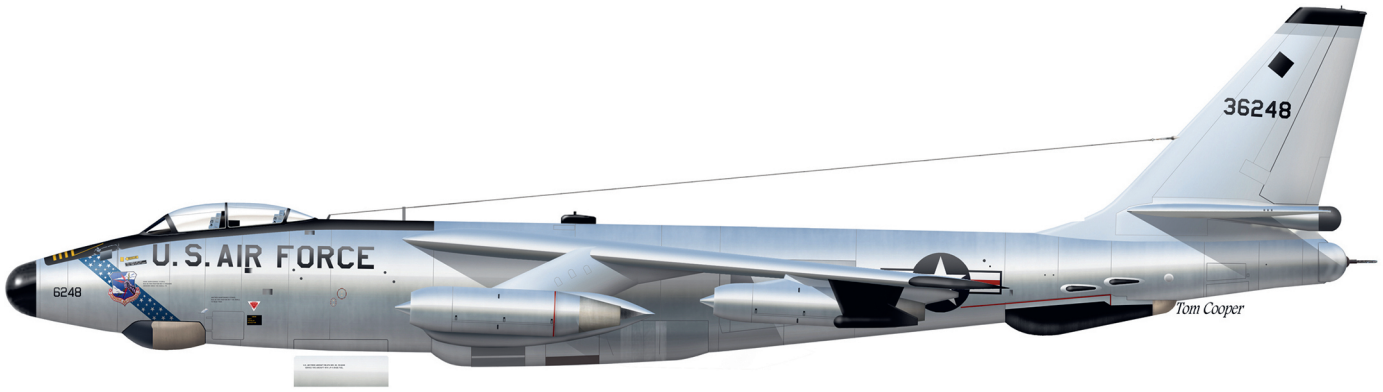


Within the frame of Operation Anadyr, the Soviets deployed their crack 32nd Guards 'Vilensky' Fighter Aviation Regiment to Cuba, one of the first equipped with the then brand-new MiG-21F-13 interceptor. For unknown reason this was redesignated the 213th Fighter Aviation Regiment. The aircraft – a few of which belonged to the 0-series with narrow-chord fin and early form of underwing hardpoints, but upgraded to the F-13-standard, as shown in the main artwork – and personnel reached Cuba in mid-September 1962, and were still in the process of assembling and working up their aircraft at the time of the Crisis. They had their Soviet red stars crudely overpainted in light grey but otherwise wore the same livery and Cuban national markings as the MiG-15/17/19s. Their principal armament consisted of R-3S air-to-air missiles. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)

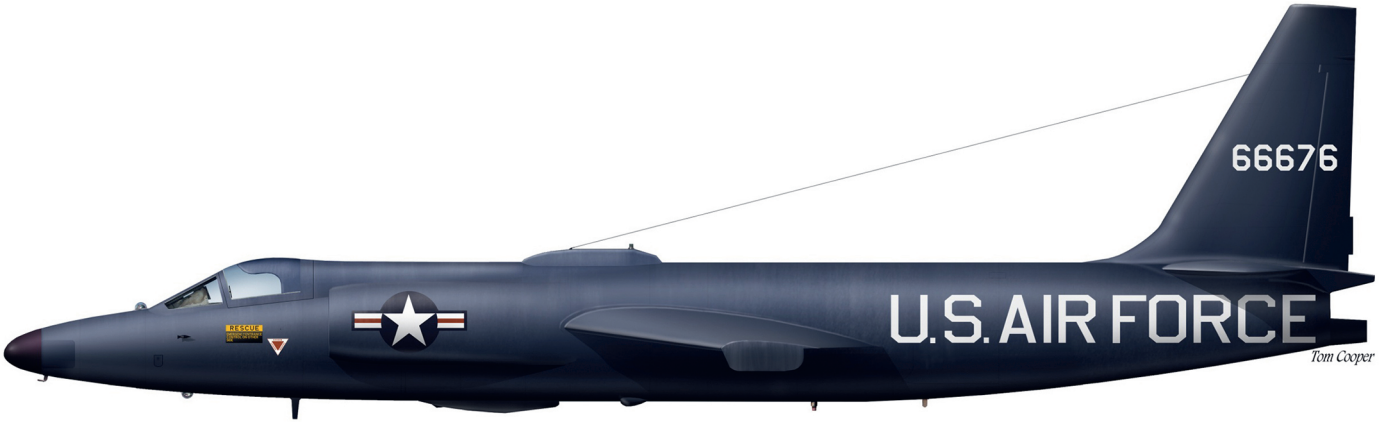


The last flying component of Operation Anadyr to reach Cuba – on 5 October 1962 – included the 759th Independent Red Banner 'Tallinn' Torpedo-Bomber Regiment. Many of its 33 Ilyushin Il-28 bombers shipped to Cuba were actually owned by the Bulgarian air force, and had been undergoing overhauls in the USSR. Their assembly began on 14 October, at San Julian; seven were ready for action by 10 November, with six others in an advanced state of assembly. However, none of these was equipped for the delivery of RDS-6 Tatyana nuclear bombs (shown inset), six of which had been supplied. As far as is known, they wore the same livery as the Cuban and Soviet MiGs. They may have retained their two-digit borts but the available photographs are unclear in regards of national markings. In total, Soviet Il-28s made only some 80 flights before Moscow ordered their disassembly and withdrawal. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)

One of the most-overlooked aspects of the Cuban Missile Crisis was the deployment of the 561st and 584th Regiments with Raduga FKR-1 (ASCC/NATO reporting name 'SSC-2a Salish') anti-ship missiles. Each regiment had eight launchers and five missiles per launcher, for a total of some 80 missiles. The US analysts mistook them for the – outwardly very similar – conventionally-armed S-2 Sopka coastal defence system (ASCC/NATO reporting name 'SSC-2b Samlet'). Correspondingly, they were largely ignored, as was the arrival of their 14kT nuclear warheads. Some sources claim that the unit commander had the authority to launch them at own discretion in response to an attempted US amphibious landing. Based on a scaled-down MiG-15 design with cockpit and undercarriage removed, the FKR-1 was powered by a Klimov RD-500K turbojet engine reverse-engineered from the Rolls-Royce Derwent. Launched from a relatively simple launch rail with the help of the SPRD-15 booster, it could reach a speed of Mach 0.9 over a range of 178km (111 miles). The FKR-1 had inertial guidance system, with active radar homing in the terminal flight phase. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)

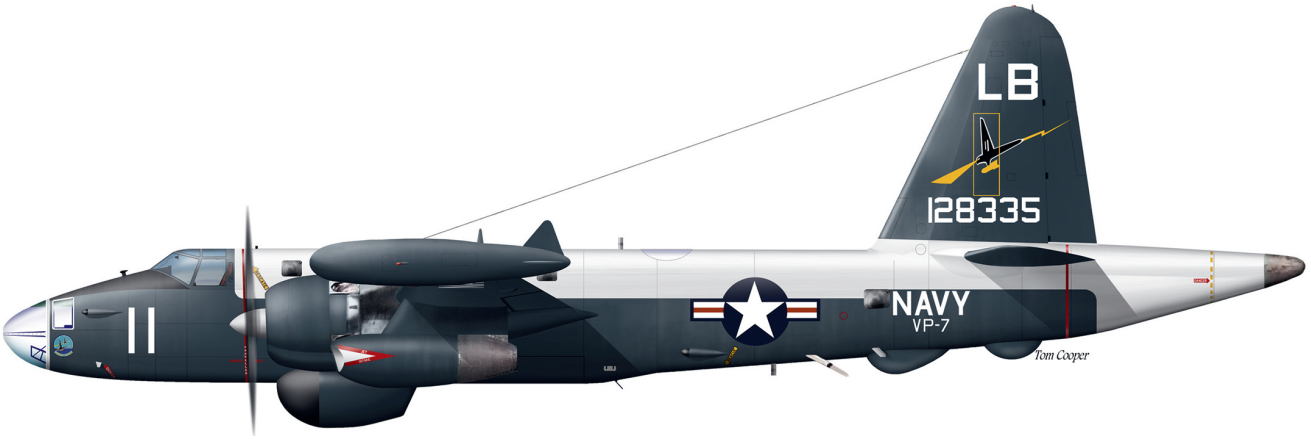


The spearhead of the US reconnaissance effort around and over Cuba were Boeing RB-47H Stratojet reconnaissance bombers of the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, Strategic Air Command, USAF. Equipped for electronic intelligence (ELINT or 'ferret') missions, they often flew missions along the periphery of Cuba under Operation Common Cause, gathering data on Soviet radar and communication systems. RB-47Hs flew a total of 116 ELINT mission, losing three aircraft and 10 crew to non-combat incidents in the process. This RB-47H (FY-serial number 53-6248), crashed on take-off from Kindley AFB, Bermuda, on 26 October, while underway to search for the Soviet tanker *Grozny*, under Operation Blue Banner, that was conducted for four days in support of the US Navy. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)

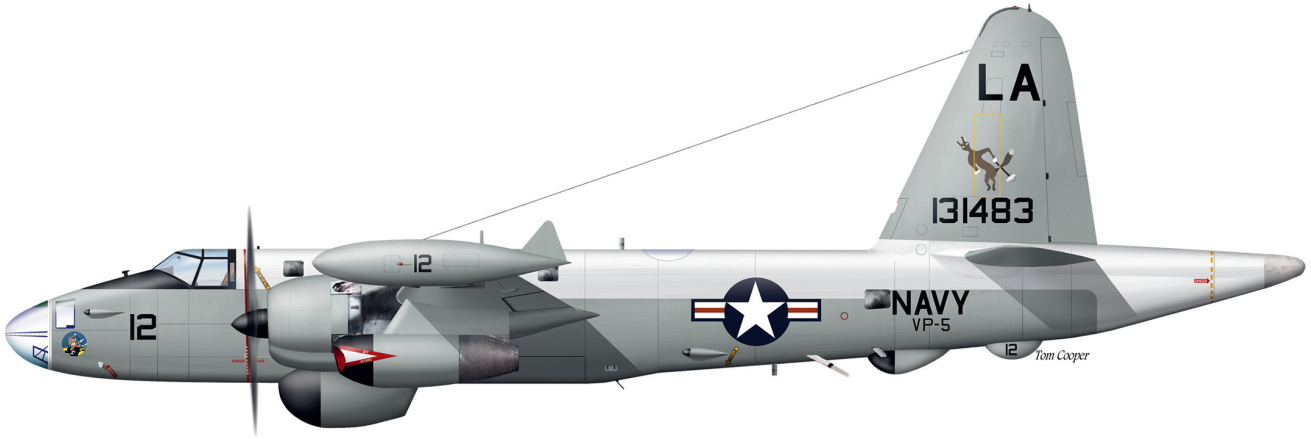


In conjunction with Operation Common Cause, Operation Brass Knob included overflights by Lockheed U-2 photoreconnaissance aircraft of the US Air Force, with the aim of precisely localising the Soviet air defence sites detected by RB-47Hs. Like the CIA-operated U-2s of the time, the USAF-operated examples wore an overall livery in AN607 non-specular sea blue, though unlike the CIA-operated aircraft they also carried full national insignia and service titles. The aircraft shown here is FY-serial number 56-6676, flown by Major Rudolf Anderson when he was shot down and killed by a Soviet-operated SA-2 SAM on 27 October 1962. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)

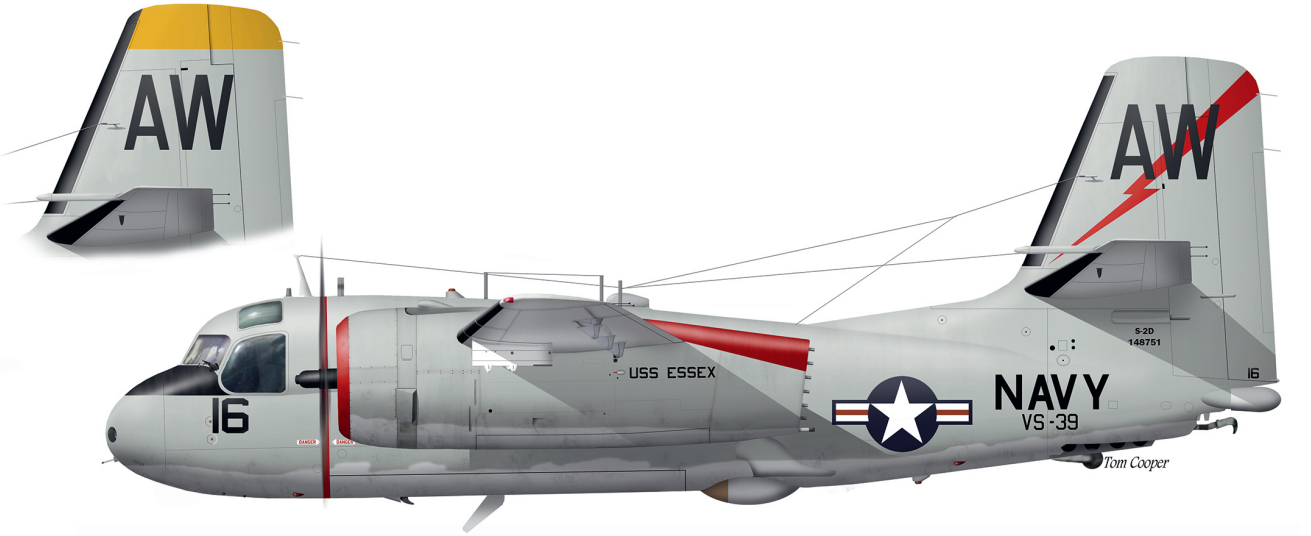
Once the RB-47Hs had pin-pointed the Soviet radars and other air defence systems, and the U-2s had photographed them from high altitude, it fell to Ling-Temco-Vought (LTV) RF-8A Crusader reconnaissance jets of the US Navy to fly low-altitude photoreconnaissance. The key RF-8 unit during the Cuban Missile Crisis was VFP-62. Initially based at NAS Cecil Field, before forward deployed to NAS Key West, the squadron maintained 10 operational aircraft, with seven on permanent standby throughout the crisis. The squadron also had five detachments on several aircraft carriers in the Atlantic Ocean. The illustrated example was decorated with VFP-62's insignia in the form of a blue-and-gold knight's helmet, a sword and shield, and – on the starboard side – also a small *Playboy* rabbit, because the unit included four Marine pilots from VMCJ-2. Mission markings, worn low on the fuselage very slightly to the rear of the cockpit (show here enlarged in the inset) took the form of 'Castro with dead chicken'. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



Naval operations around Cuba were heavily dependent on reconnaissance by Lockheed P2V Neptune maritime patrol aircraft. The most numerous variant in service as of 1962 was the P2V-5F (redesignated P-2E in September of that year), which included two J34 jet engines to increase power on take-off and additional fuel for improved endurance. Unsurprisingly, P2Vs were also the first US aircraft sighted by the majority of Soviet servicemen underway in the direction of Cuba as soon as their ships approached the Bahamas archipelago. This P2V-5 of VP-7 (modex LB11, BuAerNo 128335) was one of the Neptunes photographed by the staff of the 32nd/213th Aviation Regiment while inspecting the merchant *Nikolayevsk*, in September 1962. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)

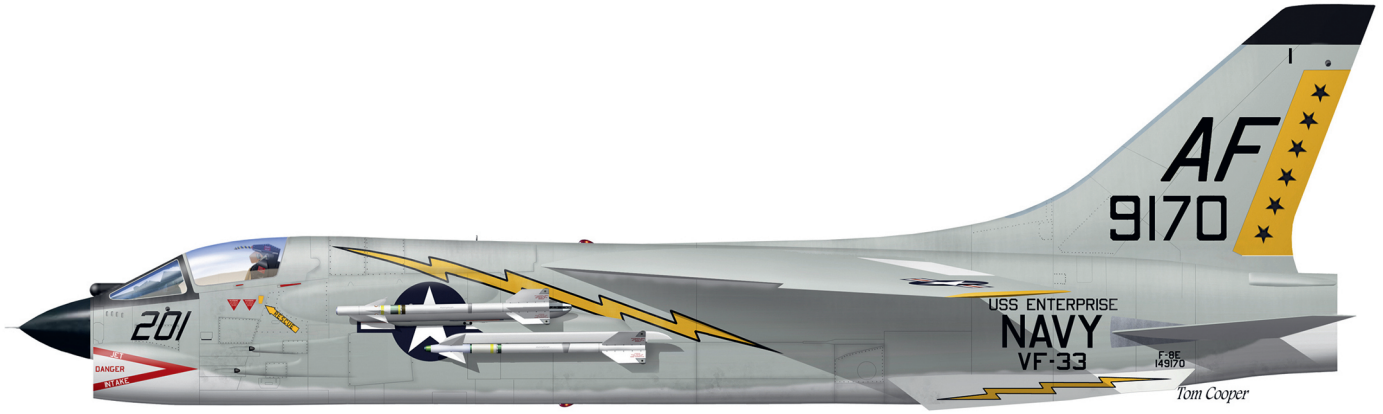


While the majority of P2V-5/P-2Es still wore a livery in white on the top of the fuselage and AN607 non-specular sea blue on the lower fuselage, wings and fin, by September 1962 the first examples appeared upon which the darker colour was replaced by gull gray. Amongst these were 11 P2V-5/P-2Es of VP-5, including this example (modex LA46, BuAerNo 131483) photographed while inspecting the Soviet merchant *Almetyevsk*, carrying Il-28 bombers of the 759th Torpedo-Bomber Regiment in September 1962. From 24 October 1962, VP-5 was assigned to Task Group 81.7, with the duty of patrolling the sea east of the quarantine line and south of Cuba. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



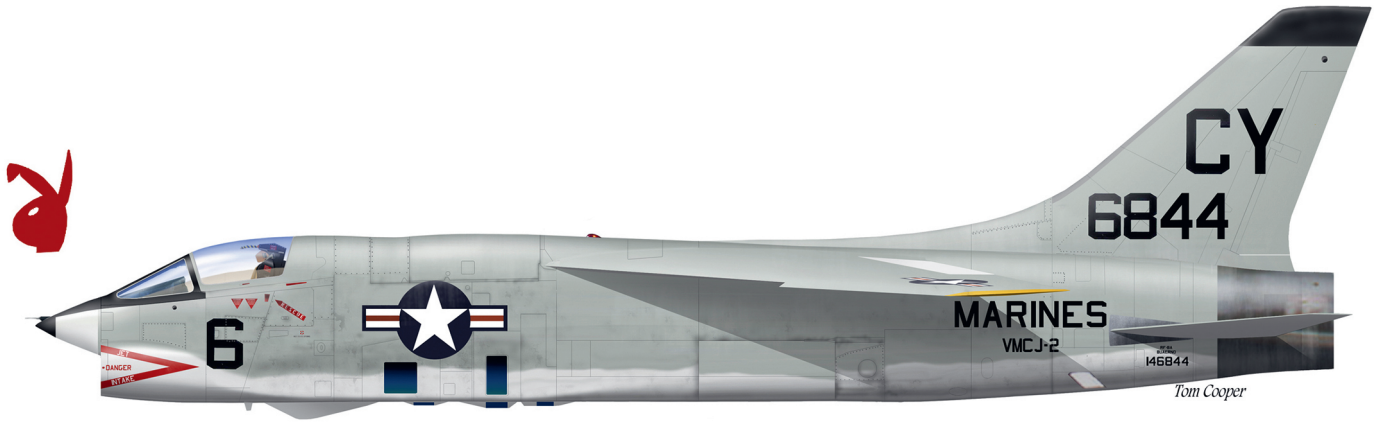
Starting from 24 October 1962, Task Force 136 of the US Navy established patrol positions east of Cuba, beyond the known range of Il-28 bombers, to enforce the quarantine of Soviet offensive weapons being moved into Cuba. One part of this powerful formation was Task Group 136.2, which included the anti-submarine aircraft carriers USS *Essex* (CVS-9), USS *Randolph* (CVS-15), and USS *Wasp* (CVS-18). Embarked on USS *Essex* were a total of 22 of Grumman S-2D Trackers operated by VA-34 (the fin of one example shown inset) and VA-39 (main artwork). In cooperation with Sikorsky SH-3A Sea Kings of HS-9, and a Grumman E-1B Tracker of VAW-12 Detachment 9, their task was to find and identify any kind of merchants or Soviet warships approaching Cuba. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)

One of the 'stars of the show' during the Cuban Missile Crisis was the then brand-new McDonnell F4H-1 Phantom II interceptor (redesignated the F-4B in September 1962) of the US Navy. Only three squadrons were operational with the type, including VF-103 'Diamondbacks', which was assigned to Carrier Air Group 6 (CVG-6, tailfin code AF), aboard USS *Enterprise* (CVAN-65). Armed with AAM-N-7/AIM-9B Sidewinder and AAM-N-6/AIM-7E Sparrow air-to-air missiles, and an advanced radar, this Mach-2-capable interceptor quickly earned itself an excellent reputation and was eventually also ordered by the US Air Force. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



The late 1950s and early 1960s were a particularly intensive period for many of squadrons of the US Navy. Perhaps the best example was fighter squadron VF-33. While still known as the 'Argonauts', the unit converted to the Grumman F11F/F-11 Tiger in 1958 and made two Mediterranean Sea cruises with CVG-6, aboard USS *Intrepid* (CVA-11). In 1961, it changed its nickname to 'Tarsiers' and transitioned to LTV F8U-1E/F-8B Crusaders to make another Mediterranean cruise, before switching to the F8U-2NE/F-8E Crusader just in time to rejoin CVG-6 and embark on USS *Enterprise* (CVAN-65) in August 1962. The principal armament of the F-8E during the Cuban Missile Crisis consisted of two AAM-N-7/AIM-9C Sidewinders (on upper pylons) and two AIM-9D Sidewinders. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)

As of 1962, the Douglas A-4C Skyhawk was the principal attack aircraft of the US Navy. Colloquially known as the 'Scooter' – because of its small size – the Skyhawk was a relatively light aircraft, but capable of carrying a bomb load equivalent to that of the Boeing B-17 bomber of the Second World War. Indeed, in addition to a wide variety of conventional weaponry, its principal armament as of 1962 was the B43 thermonuclear bomb with a variable yield of between 70 kilotons and one megaton. Each attack carrier of the US Navy involved in the Cuban Missile Crisis had two A-4 squadrons embarked. The example shown here was from attack squadron VA-34: originally assigned to CVG-3 (and embarked on USS *Saratoga*, CVA-60), it was redeployed to USS *Enterprise* during the crisis until 16 November 1962, when it switched place with A-4Cs of VA-62, from USS *Independence* (CVA-62). (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



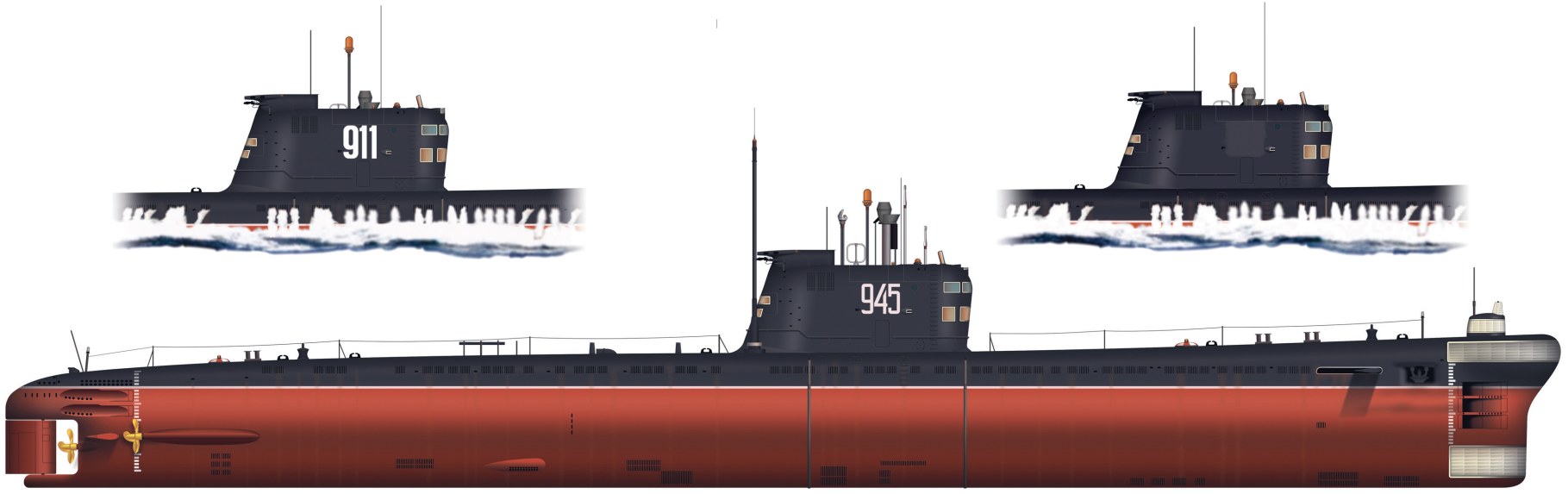
Another unit operating RF-8As was Marine squadron VMCJ-2, which used the *Playboy* rabbit insignia – sometimes applied on the starboard side of the fuselage, mostly in red, sometimes in black. The *Playboy* magazine refused permission for its use, and thus one ear was frequently (though not always) drawn in a bent position. VMCJ-2 maintained a detachment forward deployed at NAS Guantanamo Bay throughout the Cuban Missile Crisis, and they flew some of the most dangerous, low-altitude reconnaissance sorties in addition to high-altitude operations. They were regularly fired upon by Cuban air defences and hit several times. In early November 1962 they had at least two known encounters with Soviet-flown MiG-21F-13s. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)

As of June 1962, the Air Defense Command (ADC) of the US Air Force included 17 squadrons (289 aircraft) equipped with McDonnell F-101B Voodoo interceptors, 14 squadrons (241 aircraft) with Convair F-106A Delta Darts, and 10 (228 aircraft) equipped with the older Convair F-102A Delta Dagger. All were put on alert during the Cuban Missile Crisis and tasked with protection of major military installations around the USA. Holloman AFB was undergoing reconstruction and only four F-102As of the 331st Fighter-Interceptor Squadron were based there as of early September. On 26 October, they were replaced by four jets from the 325th FIS, while the locally-based 482nd FIS – a jet of which is illustrated here – was rapidly worked up to operational condition. The primary armament of F-102As during the Cuban Missile Crisis was the GAR-11/AIM-23A Falcon air-to-air missile with a 0.25kT nuclear warhead. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)

The Lockheed F-104 Starfighter proved highly problematic early during its service and only its solid performance during the Berlin Crisis of 1961 convinced the ADC and USAF to reacquire and retain it, respectively. The latter already had one unit operating the type in the form of the 479th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) – a unit assigned to the Tactical Air Command, based at George AFB, in California. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, one element of this Wing – the 435th Tactical Fighter Squadron – was redeployed to NAS Key West, in Florida, because it was considered better suited for combat against the Cuban fighters. The Pentagon's contingency planning for the event of an escalation envisaged eight GAR-8/AIM-9B Sidewinder-armed F-104Cs providing top cover for 16 F-101s in a strike on San Julian, with the aim of knocking out the Soviet Il-28 bombers deployed there. This illustration shows F-104C with FY-serial 56-883, operated by the 479th TFW in 1962. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)

David Bocquelet & Tom Cooper

On 7 and 8 September 1962, Moscow deployed a total of 24 launchers and 36 R-12 medium-range ballistic missiles (ASCC/NATO reporting name 'SS-4 Sandal') to Cuba. Operated by the 514th, 539th, and 546th Regiments, they had a range of 2,080km (which they could cover within about 12–13 minutes), and each missile was equipped with a one megaton warhead. None was ready for operations as of 22 October, and only some 6–8 missiles were fuelled, mated with a warhead, and targeted before Moscow ordered their dismantling on 28 October 1962. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



While all Soviet surface vessels carrying additional armament and personnel to Cuba had turned around by the morning of 23 October 1962, four Project 641 (ASCC/NATO reporting name 'Foxtrot-class') submarines that left the Kola Peninsula on 1 October continued their voyage. These were B-4, B-36, B-59, and B-130. They had been detected and tracked by different means while crossing the Atlantic, but not attacked: the US Navy was instructed to signal them to surface by dropping grenades and practice depth charges nearby. Although corresponding communication was forwarded to Moscow, the submarine commanders were never informed and this led to a major crisis of 27 October, when the commander of the submarine detachment had to prevent two of the officers of B-59 from firing a nuclear-armed torpedo. Aircraft and warships of the US Navy photographed at least three of the Foxtrots involved. These reconstructions show their appearance as of October 1962. Unlike Western warships, Soviet vessels did not carry unique permanent numbers, only mission-specific numbers: B-130 wore the mission number 945 on its sail, while the insets show the sails of the B-36 (mission number 911), and the B-59 (no mission number). (Artworks by Anderson Subtil)

(Map by Micky Hewitt)

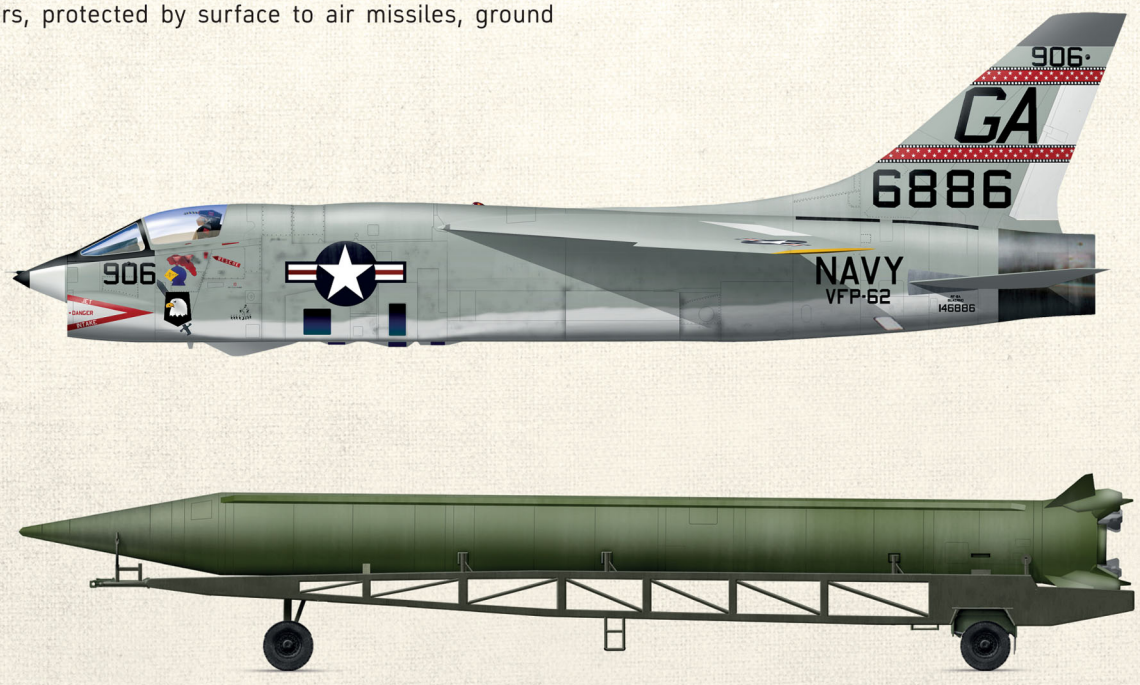
Latin America @ War - concise and insightful text, original photography and unique colour artworks, examining conflict throughout South America in the 20th century and beyond.

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War the Western Allies – led by the US – soon found themselves at odds with the Communist Bloc dominated by the Soviet Union. In the well-known phrase coined by Winston Churchill, an 'Iron Curtain' had descended across Europe. In the shadow of this Iron Curtain a conflict of ideologies erupted, known as the Cold War.

Halfway across the globe, in the Caribbean, the island of Cuba had become a playground and haven for rich Americans, and organised crime flourished there under the umbrella provided by dictator Fulgencio Batista. Batista was ousted in a revolution led by Fidel Castro who although nominally non-aligned soon fell into the orbit of the Communist Bloc. After the failed US-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion attempt of 1961, Castro's Cuba sought ever-closer ties and security guarantees with the USSR.

Thus it was in 1962 that the US discovered evidence that the USSR was building military infrastructure in Cuba to support nuclear-armed ballistic missiles and Ilyushin bombers, protected by surface to air missiles, ground troops, anti-ship missiles and fast attack boats. For the US this was intolerable and preparations were made to destroy the missiles and invade the island. Cuba was placed under a naval quarantine and ships bound there were to be boarded and searched. The stage was set for what became known as the Cuban Missile Crisis and what many believe was perhaps the closest that the world has come to all out nuclear warfare between the two great Superpowers.

Volume 2 of *Pigs, Missiles and the CIA* continues the story of Cuba following the Bay of Pigs Invasion and examines the development and timeline of the missile crisis as events jumped between Washington, DC, Moscow, Havanna, and the seas and skies around Cuba in a deadly game of brinksmanship that came close to unleashing nuclear war upon the world. This volume is illustrated throughout with period photographs and specially commissioned colour artworks.



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